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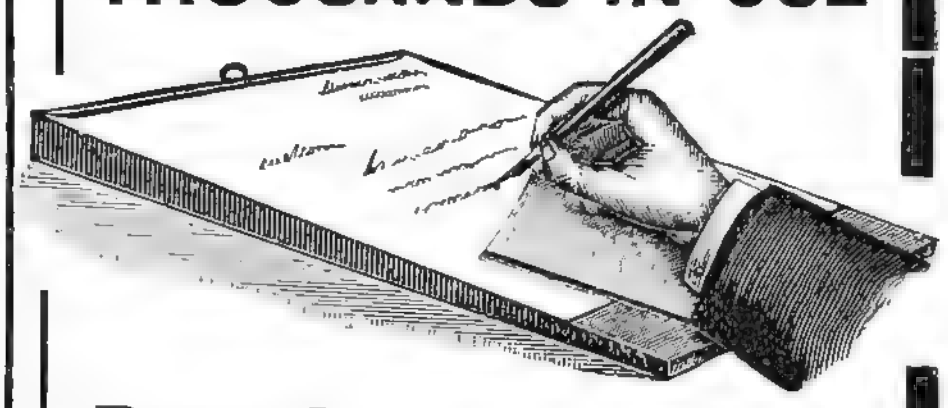

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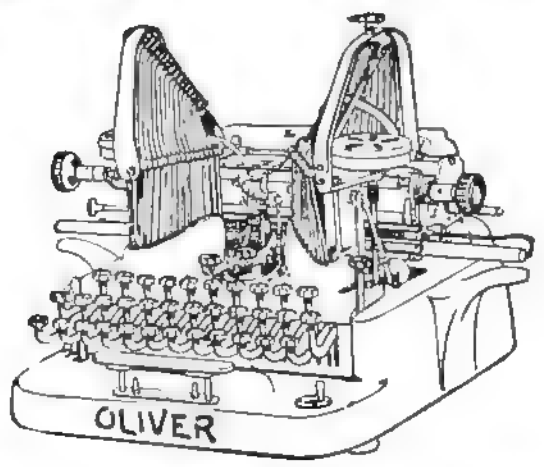

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THE
ENGLISH REVIEW
DECEMBER 1909

MODERN POETRY

The Clerk of Kenfig

By Ernest Rhys

THE Clerk of Kenfig is drinking hard,—
Drinking night and day ;
He cannot bear the driving sand,
Salt with the sea, wild with the wind,
That blows from Kenfig bay.

This night, I think, the sou'west wind
Is worse than ever it was :
The Clerk,—he had better pray than drink,
For the sand might be blown from Pharaoh's land
By a blast of the Samoom's jaws.

It is in the church and over the graves :
It is in at the Clerk's own door :
He has swept it up, but what is this
Doth spin and twine in spirals fine
Its thin thread on the floor ?

The Clerk is afraid to go to his bed ;
He has piled the hearth up higher ;
But the sand comes down the chimney-louvre ;
The grit is in his drinking-cup,
The silt puts out the fire.

And still he sat and still he drank
Until the night grew old :
And then there came a triple knock
Upon the door, upon his heart ;
It made his heart turn cold.

And " Come, good Clerk," and " Come with me ! "
A voice said at the door :
" This night, thou know'st, is All Saints' night :
" The church is full, the dead-folk wait ;
" They have waited this hour and more."

Thereat he gat him up ; but when
The Clerk undid the door,
The sand fell in like a heavy man,
And like a man-tall drift of snow
Lay huddled on the floor.

It lay there like a drunken man,
That could not rise again :
But what might be an angry hand
Was at the priest, to have him out
Into the rigid rain.

* * * *

" Stand up, good Clerk, in Kenfig church :
" Unsay the word you said,—
" The dead who lay beneath the sand
" Should never rise at the Lord's right hand
" At the rising of the dead ! . . ."

" And Christ thee keep, thou cruel Clerk ;
" And Mary in her might ;
" Around thee kneel the blessèd dead :
" And thou shalt say the Creed, and pray,
" And preach Christ risen this night ! "

He saw them kneel, as he fear'd to see,—
The folk of Kenfig there,—
Yes, Roger Dunn, and Mary John,
And the Spanish captain that was stabb'd
By the old squire of Sker.

He feared to see them stare on him,—
A death's-head every one :
But their faces gleam as they gaze on him,
And their eyes beseech like marigolds
That do beseech the sun.

They stare on him, not stained with death,
  But cloth'd in white and clean;
Yes, white as sea-mews by the sea,
He sees them kneel there blessèdly,—
  And not a death's-head seen.

" Stand up, good Clerk; stand up and preach
  " The Resurrection ! "
But the sand hath parched his nether lip,
He cannot say a word nor pray:
  His grace hath from him gone.

But now the Holy Rood hath found
  A voice to call them home:
It speaks them kindly, one by one,
And one by one, the dead are gone,
  Like sea-mews from the foam.

The rood was bright with candle-light
  Until the last was flown;
The darker then the mortal dark
That settled on the soulless Clerk
  Like the night of Babylon.

Christ keep thy feet in Kenfig street,
  And save them in the sand,
Where the cruel Clerk of Kenfig lies
That did deny the dead to rise
  And sit at Christ's right hand.

Three Poems

By John Freeman

UNDER THE LINDEN BRANCHES

Under the linden branches
They sit and whisper ;
Hardly a quiver
Of leaves, hardly a lisp or
Sigh in the air.
Under the linden branches
They sit, and shiver
At the slow air's fingers
Drawn through the linden branches
Where the year's sweet lingers ;
And sudden avalanches
Of memories, fears,
Shake from the linden branches
Upon them sitting
With hardly a sigh or a whisper
Or quiver of tears.

INEVITABLE CHANGE

Young as the Spring seemed life when she
Came from her silent East to me;
Unquiet as Autumn was my breast
When she declined into her West.

Such tender, such untroubling things
She taught me, daughter of all Springs ;
Such dusty deathly lore I learned
When her last embers redly burned.

How should it hap (Love, canst thou say ?)
Such end should be to so pure day ?
Such shining chastity give place
To this annulling grave's disgrace ?

Such hopes be quenched in this despair,
Grace chilled to granite everywhere ?
How should—in vain I cry—how should
That be, alas, which *only* could !

LETTER TO JANE

When you are milking, Jane,
And see the merry sun
Drop toward Three-Mile Hill ;
And when the fowls all run
For supper, Jane,
And the day's almost done—
Then think.

When you are walking, Jane,
Alone and sad, maybe,
And Tom or Jack, or others,
Laugh and make sport of me,
For envy, Jane,
Though I be 'cross the Sea,
Yet think.

And in the dimpsey, Jane,
When the small stars do blink,
And under hiding trees
Lads and lasses drink
Soft kisses, Jane,
That make the moon to wink,
Then think.

For you do know me, Jane,
How that I love you so
That Tom or Jack, or others,
Best reckon how they go
To kiss you, Jane. . . .
'Tis more than words would flow,
I think !

Persephone

By Frederic Manning

Yea, she hath passed hereby, and blessed the sheaves,
And the great garths, and stacks, and quiet farms
And all the tawny, and the crimson, leaves.
Yea, she hath passed, with poppies in her arms,
Under the star of dusk, through stealing mist,
And blessed the earth, and gone, while no man wist.

With slow, reluctant feet, and weary eyes,
And eye-lids heavy with the coming sleep,
With small breasts lifted up in stress of sighs,
She passed, as shadows pass, among the sheep;
While the earth dreamed, and only I was ware
Of that faint fragrance blown from her soft hair.

The land lay steeped in peace of silent dreams;
There was no sound amid the sacred boughs,
Nor any mournful music in her streams:
Only I saw the shadow on her brows,
Only I knew her for the yearly slain,
And wept; and weep until she come again.

A Pagan Creed

Sallustius's "De Diis et Mundo"

By Professor Gilbert Murray

It is a curiously difficult task to form any fair conception of the working religion of the ancients. The whole study of Comparative Religion is, of course, new, and we have certainly got beyond Taylor and Warburton. But one has only to read, say, the first chapter of Mr. Dickinson's *Greek View of Life* and compare it with the results of the anthropologists, Reinach or Preuss or Miss Harrison, to feel how far from clear our conceptions are even now.

We have learned rather late the difference between religion and mythology. We have learned also that ancient religion was not an affair of creeds. It had beliefs, of course, and postulates. I can never follow those anthropologists who deal with rites and ceremonies as perfectly self-contained objects without any implied theory or belief behind them. But the beliefs of the ancients, except for a few peculiar sects, were not creeds or dogmas closely defined and consciously asserted as true. They were either things taken for granted—sometimes unconscious presuppositions, sometimes doctrines accepted because no one oubted them—or else they were conscious speculations tentatively put forward by critics.

The religion that made its way into literature, and that consequently has come down to us, consists largely of this latter class, conscious speculation. There is also the mythology of the poets; but we seem to have no trace of a period in which that mythology was an object of real religion. It was like the mediæval tales of chivalry, not like the Bible. The Superstitious Man in Theophrastus takes no interest whatever in mythology. The religious inscriptions and, as far as we can make out, the religious acts of communities were very little affected by it. If we turn to the *Inscriptiones Sacræ* in Dittenberger, the first that we find is the Athenian regulation, long and important, about the worship in the joint precinct of Neleus and Basile: Neleus.

whom we only knew from Homer as the knightly father of the garrulous old nobleman, Nestor; and Basile, whom we had never heard of at all! Neleus was really, it seems, a God of Death, "the Unpitying." The romantic mythology simply transformed him to suit its own purposes. And Basile, the underworld "Queen": the mythology happened to have no use for her. Her place was occupied.

The mythology, then, rich as it is and full of the remains of primitive ritual, is not much use to us for estimating the actual working religion of the Greeks at any period that we know. What else is left us? There is plenty of information about ritual: especially, of course, such ritual as was odd or extravagant or in any way particularly interesting to an observer. We know a good deal about the rites performed at the chief Athenian feasts, at the oracle of Trophonius, at Delphi; and we have on inscriptions many lists of taboos and forbidden acts.

We can analyse and compare this material and reach thereby very instructive and surprising results. We can show that nearly all Greek ritual is an expurgated survival of something very primitive and savage, reminding one of West African and Polynesian fetish-worshippers. But we want something quite different from this. We want to know the living religion of some given time as it affected thought and emotion and conduct.

Again, literature enables us sometimes to approach pretty close, in various ways, to the minds of certain of the great men of antiquity, and understand how they thought and felt about a good many subjects. At times one of these subjects is the accepted religion of their society; we can see how they criticised it or rejected it. But it is very hard to know from their reactions against it what that accepted religion really was. Who, for instance, knows Herodotus's religion? He talks in his penetrating and garrulous way, "sometimes for children and sometimes for philosophers," as Gibbon puts it, about everything in the world; but at the end of his book you find that he has not opened his heart on this subject. No doubt his profession as a reciter and story-teller prevented him. We can see that Thucydides was sceptical; but can we fully see what his scepticism was directed against, or where, for instance, Nikias would have disagreed with him, or where he and Nikias both agreed against us?

We have, of course, the systems of the great philosophers—especially of Plato and Aristotle. Better than either, perhaps, we can make out the religion of M. Aurelius. Amid all the roughness and plainness of his literary style, Marcus possessed a gift which has been granted to few, the power of writing down

what was in his heart just as it was, not obscured by any consciousness of the presence of witnesses or any striving after effect. He does not seem to have tried deliberately to reveal himself, yet he has revealed himself in that short personal note-book almost as much as the great inspired egotists, Rousseau and St. Augustine. True, there are some passages in the book which are unintelligible to us; that is natural in a work which was not meant to be read by the public; broken flames of the white passion that consumed him bursting through the armour of his habitual accuracy and self-restraint.

People fail to understand Marcus, not because of his lack of self-expression, but because it is hard for most men to breathe at that intense height of spiritual life, or, at least, to breathe soberly. They can do it if they are allowed to abandon themselves to floods of emotion, and lose self-judgment and self-control. I am often rather shocked at good critics speaking of Marcus as "cold." There is as much intensity of feeling in Τὰ εἰς ἑαυτὸν as in most of the nobler modern books of religion, only there is a greater power controlling it. The feeling never amounts to complete self-abandonment. *To Hêgemonikon* never trembles upon its throne; and the emotion is most severely purged of earthly dross. That being so, we children of earth respond to it less readily.

Still, whether or no we can share Marcus's religion, we can at any rate understand most of it. But even then we reach only the personal religion of a very extraordinary man; we are not much nearer to the religion of the average educated person—the background against which Marcus, like Plato, ought to stand out. I believe that our conceptions of it are really very vague and various. I remember reading somewhere the confident statement that "the Pagan thought there was no harm in stealing, only in being found out." It is interesting to trace the chain of helpless mistakes on which that statement depends. I have seen in a learned book the startling observation that the Gospels first taught the world that women had immortal souls. The fact is that the belief in immortality is of dateless antiquity, and, as far as I know, no person in classical times ever suggested that one sex was more immortal than the other. These are obvious and demonstrable mistakes. But there are many large and apparently simple questions about which good and careful scholars probably feel quite uncertain. Were the morals of Epictetus or the morals of Part V. of the Anthology most near to those of real life? What are we to feel about slavery,

about the exposing of children? True, slavery was not peculiar to antiquity; it flourished among civilised people of English blood till a few years ago. And the history of infanticide among the finest modern nations is such as to make one reluctant to throw stones, and even doubtful in which direction to throw them. Still, these great facts, and others like them, have to be understood, and are rather hard to understand, in their bearing on the religious life of the ancients. Points of minor morals again are apt to surprise a reader of ancient literature. Was it really usual in the first century, as Philo seems to say, for gentlemen at dinner-parties to black one another's eyes or bite one another's ears off? (De Vit. Contempl., p. 477 M.) Or were such practices confined to some Smart Set? Or was Philo, for his own purposes, using some particular scandalous occurrence as if it were typical?

St. Augustine mentions among the virtues of his mother her unusual meekness and tact. Although her husband had a fiery temper, she never had bruises on the face, which made her a *rara avis* among the matrons of her circle. (Conf., ix. 9). Her circle, presumably, included Christians as well as Pagans and Manichæans. And Philo's circle can scarcely be considered Pagan. Still, whether it be religion, or whether it be merely date and latitude, I think many scholars are left with a suspicion that, if we could actually see the daily life of Plato and Seneca, or at any rate of Cicero and Demosthenes, we might find these objects of our admiration habitually doing things for which it would be hard not to cut them, and believing things worthy only of the most blinded of blinded heathen.

We must remember always that this very same puzzle recurs about every age of history, as soon as its manners are studied in detail. One need not go beyond Salimbene's Chronicle, one need hardly go beyond Macaulay's History, to realise that. And as for the difference of religion, we should bear in mind that, just at the time we are about to consider, the middle of the fourth century, the conduct of the Christians, both to the rest of the world and to one another, was very far from evangelical. Ammianus says that no savage beasts could equal its cruelty. Ammianus was a Pagan; but St. Gregory says it was like hell (Gibbon, chap. xxi. pp. 161, 162).

I have expressed elsewhere my own general answer to this puzzle (Greek Epic., chap. i.). Not only in early Greek times but throughout the whole of antiquity, the possibility of all sorts of absurd and atrocious things lay much nearer, the protective forces of society were much weaker, the strain on

personal character and the need for real "wisdom and virtue" were much greater than they are at the present day. Of course, different periods of antiquity varied greatly, both in the conventional standard demanded and in the spiritual force which answered or surpassed the demand. But, in general, the strong governments and orderly societies of modern Europe have made it infinitely easier for men of no particular virtue to live a decent life, infinitely easier also for men of no particular reasoning power or scientific knowledge to have a more or less scientific or sane view of the world.

That is only an opinion like another, and in any case it does not carry us far towards solving the main problem: it brings us no nearer to knowledge of anything that we may call typically a pagan religious creed or a pagan code of morals, in any age from Hesiod to Julian.

I propose in this essay to describe a document which goes some way towards filling this surprising gap in our knowledge. It does not belong to the great period either of Greece or of Rome. But it belongs to one of the most interesting periods, when ancient Paganism was setting itself in definite contrast to Christianity and had risen, therefore, to the effort of self-consciousness implied in a creed.

It will occur to my readers that some of the doctrines involved may be derived from Christian sources. As to this, a detailed answer would be a long business; I will only say that I do not think that is the case. In the first place, every important doctrine can be traced to pre-Christian origins; in the second, the most striking points of agreement are due rather to the mystical atmosphere of the fourth century than to anything distinctively Pagan or distinctively Christian.

The book of which I speak is the work of Sallustius, *About the Gods and the World*, a book, I should say, about the length of the Scotch Shorter Catechism. It is printed in the third volume of Mullach's *Fragmenta Philosophorum;* apart from that, the only edition generally accessible—and that is rare—is a duodecimo published by Allatius in 1539. Orelli's brochure of 1821 seems to be unprocurable.

The author was a close friend of the Emperor Julian and an enthusiastic supporter of his effort to restore the old religion. He was given the rank of prefect in 362, that of consul in 363. One must remember, of course, that in that rigorous and ascetic Court high rank connoted no pomp or luxury. Julian had dismissed the thousand hairdressers, the innumerable cooks and eunuchs, of his Christian predecessor. It probably brought with it

only an increased obligation to live on pulse and to do without such pamperings of the body as fine clothes or warmth or washing.

Julian's fourth oration, a prose hymn to the Sun, *Basileus Helios*, is dedicated to Sallustius ; his eighth is a consolation addressed to himself upon the Departure of Sallustius.* It is a touching and even a noble treatise. The nervousness and self-distrust which was habitual in Julian makes him write always with a certain affectation, but no one could mistake the real feeling of loss and loneliness that runs through the consolation. He has lost his *συναστιστής*, and now "Odysseus is left alone." So he writes, quoting the Iliad ; Sallustius has been carried by God outside the spears and arrows, "which malignant men were always aiming at you, or rather at me, trying to wound me through you, and believing that the only way to beat me down was by depriving me of the fellowship of my true friend and fellow-soldier, the comrade who never flinched from sharing my dangers."

One note recurs four times ; he has lost the one man to whom he could talk as a brother ; the man of *ἄδολος καὶ καθαρὰ παρρησία*, who was honest and unafraid and able to contradict the emperor freely because of their mutual love. If you think of it, Julian, for all his gentlenesss, must have been an alarming emperor to converse with. His standard of conduct was not only uncomfortably high, it was also a little unaccountable. The most correct and blameless Court officials must often have suspected that the emperor looked upon them as simply wallowing in sin. And that feeling does not promote ease or truthfulness. Julian compares his friendship with Sallustius to that of Scipio and Lælius. People said of Scipio that he only carried out what Lælius told him. "Is that true of me ?" Julian asks himself. "Have I only done what Sallustius told me ?" His answer is sincere and beautiful : *κοινὰ τὰ φίλων*. It little matters who suggested, and who agreed to the suggestion ; his thoughts and any credit that came from the thoughts, are his friend's as much as his own. We happen to hear from the Christian Theodoret (Hist. iii. 11) that on one occasion when Julian was nearly goaded into persecution of the Christians, it was a certain Sallustius who recalled him to their fixed policy of toleration.

Sallustius then may be taken to represent in the most authoritative way the Pagan reaction of Julian's time, in its final struggle against Christianity.

He was a Neo-Platonist, that is clear. But it is not as a

* Probably his recall from Gaul by order of Constantius ; some, interpreting mystically the last sections, refer it to Sallustius's death.

professed philosopher that he writes. It is only that Neo-Platonism had permeated the whole atmosphere of the age. The strife of the philosophical sects had almost ceased. Just as Julian's mysticism made all gods and almost all forms of worship into one, so his enthusiasm for Hellenism revered, nay, idolised, almost all the great philosophers of the past. They were all trying to say the same ineffable thing ; all lifting mankind towards the knowledge of God. I say "almost" in both cases : for the Christians are outside the pale in one domain and the Epicureans and a few Cynics in the other. Both had committed the cardinal sin ; they had denied the gods. They are sometimes lumped together as *Atheoi*.

This may surprise us at first sight, but the explanation is easy. To Julian the one great truth that matters is the presence and glory of the gods. No doubt they are all ultimately one ; they are δυνάμεις, "forces," not persons, but for reasons above our comprehension they are manifest under conditions of form, time and personality, and have so been revealed and worshipped and partly known by the great minds of the past. In Julian's mind the religious emotion itself becomes the thing to live for. Every object that has been touched by that emotion is thereby glorified and made sacred. Every shrine where men have worshipped in truth of heart is thereby a house of God. The worship may be mixed up with all sorts of folly, all sorts of unedifying practice : that must be purged away, or, still better, it must be properly understood. For to the pure all things are pure ; and the myths that shock the vulgar are noble allegories to the wise and reverent. Purge religion from dross, if you like ; but remember that you do so at your peril. One false step, one self-confident rejection of a thing which is merely too high for you to grasp, and you are darkening the Sun, casting God out of the world. And that was just what the Christians deliberately did. Quite apart from his personal wrongs and his contempt for the character of Constantius, Julian could have no sympathy for men who overturned altars and heaped blasphemy on old deserted shrines, defilers of every sacred object that was not protected by popularity. The most that such people could expect from him was that they should not be proscribed by law.

But meantime what were the multitudes of the god-fearing to believe ? The arm of the State was not very strong or effective. Labour as he might to supply good teaching to all provincial towns, Julian could not hope to educate the poor and ignorant to understand Plato and M. Aurelius. For them, he seems to say, all that is necessary is that they should be pious and God-fearing in

their own way. But for more or less educated people, not blankly ignorant, and yet not professed students of philosophy, there might be some simple and authoritative treatise issued—a sort of reasoned creed, to lay down in a convincing manner the outlines of the old Hellenic religion, before the Christians and Atheists should have swept all fear of the gods from off the earth.

The treatise is this work of Sallustius.

The Christian fathers from Minucius Felix onward have shown us what was the most vulnerable point of Paganism: the traditional mythology. Sallustius deals with it at once. The *Akroâtês*, or pupil, he says in section 1, needs some preliminary training. He should have been well brought up, should not be incurably stupid, and should not have been familiarised with foolish fables. Evidently the mythology was not to be taught to children. He then enunciates certain postulates of religious thought, viz., that God is always good and not subject to passion or to change.

In section 3 he deals with the traditional myths; in the first place, he insists that they are what he calls "divine." That is, they are inspired or have some touch of divine truth in them. This is proved by the fact that they have been uttered, and sometimes invented, by the most inspired poets and philosophers and by the gods themselves in oracles.

The myths are all expressions of God and of the goodness of God; but they follow the usual method of divine revelation, to wit, mystery and allegory. The myths state clearly the one tremendous fact that the Gods *are;* what they are the myths reveal only to those who have understanding. "The world itself is a great myth, in which bodies and inanimate things are visible, souls and minds invisible."

"But, admitting all this, how comes it that the myths are so often absurd and even immoral?" For the usual purpose of mystery and allegory: in order to make people think. The soul that wishes to know God must make its own effort; it cannot expect simply to lie still and be told. The myths by their obvious falsity and absurdity on the surface stimulate the mind capable of religion to probe deeper.

He proceeds to give instances, and chooses at once myths that had been for generations the mock of the sceptic, and in his own day furnished abundant ammunition for the artillery of Christina polemic. He takes first Hesiod's story of Kronos swallowing his children. According to the normal methods used for the interpretation of myths, this may mean that God is Mind, and all Mind returns into itself; or Kronos may be Time, and Time

gradually engulfs all the mapped-out divisions of time, as days and years melt into the past; and so on. There are five methods generally possible. There follows a rather brilliant interpretation of the myth of the judgment of Paris. This world, born as it is from the clash of opposites, is the Golden Apple thrown by Discord; Paris is the soul living according to the senses—the natural man, so to speak; in that state the Soul does not see the hidden powers of the world (Athena and Hera) but does see Beauty—because beauty is always visible, whereas the deeper things are hid—and therefore Paris declares with enthusiasm that the apple belongs to Aphrodite. Next comes a long and earnest explanation of the myth of Attis and the Mother of the Gods. It is on the face of it a story highly discreditable both to the heart and the head of those august beings, and though the rites themselves do not seem to have been in any way improper, the Christians naturally attacked the Pagans and Julian personally for countenancing the worship. The explanation is rather long to quote, it is taken directly from Julian's fifth oration in praise of the Great Mother, and reduces the myth and the ritual to an expression of the adventures of the Soul seeking God. Sallustius says definitely, as his royal friend had said at greater length, that all these stories *ἐγένετο μὲν ὅτε, ἔστι δὲ ἀεί.* They are not things that ever happened, they are truths which always exist.

So much for the whole traditional mythology. It has been explained completely away and made subservient to philosophy and edification, while it can still be used as a great well-spring of religious emotion. For the explanations given by Sallustius and Julian are never rationalistic. They never stimulate a spirit of scepticism, always a spirit of mysticism and reverence. And, lest by chance even this reverent theorising should have been somehow lacking in insight or true piety, Sallustius ends with the prayer: "When I say these things concerning the myths, may the gods themselves and the spirits of those who wrote the myths be gracious to me."

He now leaves mythology and turns to the First Cause. It must be one, and it must be present in all things. Thus, it cannot be Life, for, if it were, all things would be alive. Some think, therefore, that it is Being; but that does not satisfy Sallustius. By an argument in which he will still find some philosophers to follow him, he proves that everything which exists, exists because of some goodness in it; and thus arrives at the conclusion that the First Cause is *τὸ ἀγαθόν*, the Good.

The gods are emanations or forces issuing from the Good;

the makers of this world are secondary gods ; above them are the makers of the makers. That is, the first gods are to the second in the same relation as the second to the world. This seems to imply that the ordinary gods of mythology, Zeus, Athena, and the rest, are a little more personal than mere forces would be ; they at least have names, and perhaps something like what St. Paul calls "spiritual bodies." The first gods are entirely nameless and impersonal.

Next comes a proof that the world is eternal—a very important point of doctrine ; next that the soul is immortal ; next a definition of the workings of Divine Providence, Fate, and Fortune—a fairly skilful piece of dialectic dealing with a hopeless difficulty. Next come Virtue and Vice, and, in a perfunctory echo of Plato's *Republic*, an enumeration of the good and bad forms of human society. Then follows more adventurous matter.

First a chapter headed : "Whence Evil things come, and that there is no *Phusis Kakou*—no Nature of Evil." "It is perhaps best," he says, "to observe at once that, since the gods are good and make everything, there is no positive evil ; there is only absence of good ; just as there is no positive darkness, only absence of light."

What we call "evils" arise only in the activities of men, and even here no one ever does evil for the sake of evil. "One who indulges in some pleasant vice thinks the vice bad, but his pleasure good ; a murderer thinks the murder bad, but the money he will get by it, good ; one who injures an enemy thinks the injury bad, but the being quits with his enemy, good" ; and so on. The evil acts are all done for the sake of some good, but the Soul, being very far removed from the original flawless divine nature, makes mistakes or sins. One of the great objects of the world, he goes on to explain, of gods, men and spirits, of religious institutions and human laws alike, is to keep the souls from these errors and to purge them again when they have fallen.

Next comes a speculative difficulty. Sallustius has called the world "eternal in the fullest sense"—that is, it always has been and always will be. And yet it is "made" by the gods. How are these statements compatible ? If it was made, there must have been a time before it was made. The answer is ingenious. It is not made by handicraft as a table is ; it is not begotten as a son by a father. It is the result of a quality of God just as light is the result of a quality of the sun. The sun causes light, but the light is there as soon as the Sun is there. The world is simply the other side, as it were, of the goodness of God, and

has existed as long as that goodness has existed. If goodness is the quality which makes things to be, this argument seems quite sound.

Next come some simpler questions about man's relation to the gods. In what sense can we say that the gods are angry with the wicked or are appeased by repentance? Sallustius is quite firm. The gods cannot ever be glad—for that which is glad is also sorry; cannot be angry—for anger is a passion; and obviously they cannot be appeased by gifts or prayers. Even just men require higher motives than that. God is unchangeable, always good, always doing good. If we are good, we are nearer to the gods, and we feel it; if we are evil, we are separated further from them. It is not they that are angry, it is our sins that hide them from us and prevent the goodness of God from shining into us. If we repent, again, we do not make any change in God, we only, by the conversion of our soul towards the divine, heal our own badness and enjoy again the goodness of the gods. To say that the gods turn away from the wicked would be like saying that the sun turns away from a blind man.

Why then do we make offerings and sacrifices to the Gods, when the Gods need nothing and can have nothing added to them? We do so in order to have more communion with the gods. The whole temple service, in fact, is an elaborate allegory, a representation of the divine government of the world. "The roofed temple represents Heaven, the altars Earth, the images Life—that is why they are made in the likeness of living beings; the prayers represent the principle of Mind; the sacred herbs and stones, Matter; the mystic letters (these are the *Ephesia Grammata* and the like, about which so much has been written lately) represent the ineffable supramundane Forces; as for the animals slain for sacrifice, that is a separate question.

The custom of sacrificing animals had died out some time before this. It naturally could not continue in a society of large towns. It meant turning your temples into very ill-conducted slaughter-houses, and was also associated with a great deal of muddled and indiscriminate charity. (*See* Ammianus, xxii, 12, on the bad effect of Julian's sacrifices.) One might have hoped that men so high-minded and spiritual as Julian and Sallustius would have considered this practice unnecessary or even have reformed it away. But no. It was part of the genuine Hellenic tradition; and no jot or tittle of that tradition should, if they could help it, be allowed to die. Sacrifice is desirable, argues Sallustius, because it is a gift of life. God has given us life, as he has given us all else. We must, therefore, pay to him some

emblematic tithe of life. Again, prayers in themselves are merely words ; but with sacrifice they are words plus life, Living Words. Lastly, we are Life of a sort, and God is Life of an infinitely higher sort. To approach him we need always a medium or a mediator ; the medium between life and life must needs be life. We find that life in the sacrificed animal.

The argument shows what ingenuity these religious men had at their command, and what trouble they would take to avoid having to face a fact and reform a bad system.

There follows a long and rather difficult argument to show that the world is, in itself, eternal. The former discussion on this point had only shown that the gods would not destroy it. This shows that its own nature is indestructible. The arguments are very inconclusive, though clever, and one wonders why the author is at so much pains. Indeed, he is so earnest that at the end of the chapter he finds it necessary to apologise to the Kosmos in case his language should have been indiscreet. The reason, I think, is that the Christians were still pinning their faith to the approaching end of the world by fire.* They announced the end of the world as near, and they rejoiced in it. Nay, if we are to believe reports, certain fanatics even tried from time to time the experiment of setting fire to it, where the surface seemed inflammable, in order to hasten the coming of the kingdom which should bring such incalculable rewards to their own organisation and plunge the rest of mankind in everlasting torment. The destruction of the world, therefore, seems to have become a real subject of irritation, if not actually of terror. At any rate the doctrine lay at the very heart of the *perniciosa superstitio*, and Sallustius uses his best dialectic against it.

The title of chap. xviii. has a somewhat pathetic ring : "Why *Atheïai*"—"Atheisms" or rejections of God—"are permitted, and that God is not injured thereby." Θεὸς οὐ βλάπτεται. "If over certain parts of the world there have occurred (and will occur more hereafter) rejections of the gods, a wise man need not be disturbed at that." We have always known that the human soul was prone to error. God's providence is there ; but we cannot expect all men at all times and all places to enjoy it equally. In the human body it is only the eye that sees the light, the rest of the body for the most part is ignorant of the light. So are many parts of the earth ignorant of God.

Very likely, also, this rejection of God is a punishment.

* *Cf.* Min. Fel., p. 96, Ouzel. The doctrine in their mouths became a very different thing from the Stoic theory of the periodic reabsorption of the universe in the Divine Element.

Persons who in a previous life have known the gods but disregarded them, are perhaps now born, as it were, blind, unable to see God; persons who have committed the blasphemy of worshipping their own kings and leaders as gods may perhaps now be cast out from the knowledge of God.

The language is not decisive; human gods were not uncommon: but one would suppose a reference here to the orthodox Christians.

There follows a discussion of the *sera numinum vindicta*, the reason why the guilty are not punished immediately upon their sin and the gods' justice made manifest on earth. The answers are good. Punishment occurs more often than we think; it is not only daemons, τιμωροὶ δαίμονες, who punish the soul; the soul is always punishing itself. Then the soul lives for ever; why should there be such a hurry to have it punished? There is plenty of time. Again, if all sins were followed immediately by manifest punishment, where would human virtue be? Men would do right from fear, and there would be no virtue.

Souls are mainly punished after leaving the body; they suffer not in their immortal and rational part, but in the irrational part, in which also they sinned. That is the reason why ghosts have a shadowy body still clinging about them, especially the ghosts of evil livers: many people can testify to having seen such a shadowy body hovering about a grave.

Next comes the doctrine of metempsychosis or the transmigration of souls. Since Souls only operate through body, it follows that if, after leaving their first body, they did not enter or associate with another body, they would have nothing to do for all eternity. Which is absurd. Also, he argues, metempsychosis is the only way to explain certain apparent injustices of the world: why are some people born blind, some mad and the like, if it is not to expiate sins committed in a previous life?

The last chapter is very short. I quote it entire. "Souls that have lived in virtue, being otherwise blessed and especially separated from their irrational part and purged of all body, are joined with the gods and sway the whole world together with them." So far triumphant faith: then the after-thought of the brave man who means to live his best life even if faith fail him. "But even if none of these rewards came to them, still Virtue itself and the Joy and Glory of Virtue, and Life which acknowledges no grief and no master, would be enough to make blessed those who have set themselves to live in Virtue and have succeeded."

There the book ends. It ends upon that well-worn paradox that seems to have brought so much comfort to the nobler spirits of the ancient world. Strange how we moderns cannot rise to it ! We seem simply to lack the intensity of moral enthusiasm. When we speak of martyrs being happy on the rack; in the first place we rarely believe it, and in the second we are usually supposing that the rack will soon be over and that harps and golden crowns will presently follow. The ancient moralist believed that the good man was happy then and there, because the joy, being in his soul, was not affected by the torture of his body.

Not being able fully to feel this conviction, we naturally incline to think it affected or unreal. But, taking the conditions of the ancient world into account, we must admit that the men who uttered this belief as least understood better than most of us what suffering was. Many of them were slaves, many had been captives of war. They knew what they were talking about. I think, on a careful study of M. Aurelius, Epictetus, and some of these Neo-Platonic philosophers, that we shall be forced to realise that these men could rise to much the same heights of religious heroism as the Catholic saints of the Middle Ages, and that they often did so—if I may use such a phrase —on a purer and thinner diet of sensuous emotion, with less wallowing in the dust and less delirium.

Be that as it may, we have now seen in outline the kind of religion which ancient Paganism had become at the time of its final struggle with Christianity. It is a fairly intelligible whole, and succeeds better than most religions in combining two great appeals. It appeals to the philosopher and the thoughtful man as a fairly complete and rational system of thought, which the most speculative and enlightened mind of any age might believe without disgrace. I do not mean that it is probably true ; to me all these overpowering optimisms which, by means of a few untested *a priori* postulates affect triumphantly to disprove the most obvious facts of life, seem very soon to become meaningless. I conceive it to be no comfort at all to a man suffering agonies of frost-bite, to be told by science that cold is merely negative and does not exist. I only mean that a system like that of Sallustius is, judged by any standard, high, civilised and enlightened.

At the same time this religion appeals to the ignorant and the humble-minded. It takes from the pious villager no single object of worship that has turned his thoughts heavenwards. It may explain and purge ; it never condemns or ridicules.

To compare this Paganism in detail with its great rival would be a laborious and unsatisfactory task. Nor am I ade-

quately equipped for it. I will touch upon it very lightly. In many ways they are curiously alike. They both breathe the spirit of the fourth century as against that of the Periclean Age or the present day. One thing that is very noticeable all through late antiquity is the long and intense revolt of the human spirit against sensuality and the tyranny of the body. The subject is too large to discuss here. But I think it is clear, from the times of Pythagoras onward, that the fight against luxury was a more real and a fiercer fight than comes much into our experience. There was not, indeed, more objective luxury than in our own day; there was not nearly so much. But there was more subjective abandonment to physical pleasure, and concomitantly there was a much stronger protest against luxury, more asceticism, more deliberate hardening and subduing of the body. In the fourth century asceticism was in the ascendency; and the Emperor Julian was probably almost as proud of his earthen bed, his fireless cell, and the lice in his beard and cassock, as an Egyptian monk. I am interested to find, after most of this essay was written, that Geffcken, in the *Neue Jahrbücher* (xxi. p. 162 ff., 1908), has expressed from far fuller knowledge the same opinion. In speaking of Julian and his three great opponents, Gregory, Cyril and John Chrysostom, he finds in all of them "die gleiche tiefere Seelenstimmung," and "derselbe Spiritualismus." "The most inward man in these four contemporaries is the same." It is the spirit of the fourth century.

This is the first fact to bear in mind if we try to make any comparison between the two systems of religion. We shall get very little answer if we ask, from the point of view of a dispassionate outside historian, which system was the more superstitious or the more critical, or which led to the better conduct in life. As to the last point, it is much harder than appears at first sight to form any clear view; for each party naturally thought the other wicked, and the evidence of the unsuccessful side has been, as usual, almost entirely suppressed. Quite evidently there were good men in both, and men with almost exactly the same ideals of goodness. As to superstition, Sallustius would probably find in contemporary Christianity a great deal of anthropomorphism, a God with jealousies and passions, and a literal acceptance of many ancient myths which he would have turned into allegory. The Christians in return would certainly deride his habitual deference to innumerable stocks and stones.*

As to the kind of thing which we at present generally regard as superstitious—beliefs in ghosts, daemons, angels, charms and

* Minuc. Fel. 2, Fronto ad Ver. ii. 6, &c.

sacred words—there was not much to choose between the two parties. If one may hazard a rough comparison, I should say that Julian's party were a little like cultivated and ultra-devout Catholics, whose lives were full of mystic ceremonies and observances; the Christians, like some fierce early Protestants, who despised all Popish superstition but did, from time to time, see the Devil with his horns and tail, and stick pitchforks into him. Both sides had super-normal experiences pretty freely. Julian refers more than once to his own revelations, though he does not consider himself free to describe them. And Sallustius himself—if I am right in referring a passage in Suidas to this Sallustius and not another—had the curious power of reading in people's eyes the kind of death that was coming to them.

Can we ask which of the two was the more progressive? It is hard to measure progress, but for their own generation, at any rate, there can be no doubt. Julian's system was inextricably chained up with a dead weight of past tradition which made progress almost impossible. Every new thought or discovery had to reconcile itself somehow with the teachings of ancient Greek philosophers and even poets before it could be accepted. Christianity was almost free from this incubus. It had only the Old Jewish scriptures to drag with it; and when they were seriously troublesome, as in the case of the Mosaic code, it was generally able to show them their place.

If a student with very imperfect knowledge may venture on a general opinion on this obscure subject, it seems to me that historically speaking the character of Christianity in these centuries is to be found not so much in the doctrines which it professed, nearly all of which, after all, had their roots in older Greek thought, as in the organisation on which it rested. For my own part, when I try to understand Christianity as a mass of doctrines, Trinitarian, Monophysite, Arian, and the rest, I get no further; when I regard it as a sort of semi-secret society for mutual help rising among the proletariats of the great commercial and manufacturing towns of Asia Minor and Syria, the various historical puzzles begin to fall into place. Among other things this explains its humanity and its incessant care for the poor, and its comparative contempt for learning and culture. And if I have seemed unduly to hold even a balance which, in common opinion, cannot stay poised for an instant, let me say emphatically that, for my own part, I think humanity and care for the oppressed were then and probably are still the most important of all virtues to inculcate and to remember.

But I never wished to pit the two systems against one another.

It is enough if the consideration of Sallustius has shown, as I hope it has, that the vulgar conception of "Paganism" as an immoral system of absurd though beautiful idolatry, the negation of all spiritual effort, is, even in the decadence of the Roman Empire, totally unhistorical, totally false.

We have in Sallustius something practically amounting to a Pagan creed. I should like before finishing to append an extract from an interesting Pagan prayer. It is cited by Stobæus from a certain Eusebius, an Ionic writer of whom almost nothing is known. He has rather more philosophy in him and less superstition than Sallustius; less aspiration and more gentle self-criticism and common sense. He seems to come from a stronger and more sober age.

"May I be no man's enemy," it begins, "and may I be the friend of that which is eternal and abides. May I never quarrel with those nearest to me; and if I do, may I be reconciled quickly. May I never devise evil against any man; if any devise evil against me, may I escape uninjured and without the need of hurting him. May I love, seek, and attain only that which is good. May I wish for all men's happiness and envy none. May I never rejoice in the ill-fortune of one who has wronged me. . . . When I have done or said what is wrong, may I never wait for the rebuke of others, but always rebuke myself until I make amends. . . . May I win no victory that harms either me or my opponent. . . . May I reconcile friends who are wroth with one another. May I, to the extent of my power, give all needful help to my friends and to all who are in want. May I never fail a friend in danger. When visiting those in grief may I be able by gentle and healing words to soften their pain. . . . May I respect myself. . . . May I always keep tame that which rages within me. . . . May I accustom myself to be gentle, and never be angry with people because of circumstances. May I never talk about who is wicked and what wicked things he has done, but know good men and follow in their footsteps."

There is more of it. How unpretending it is and yet how searching! And in the whole there is no petition for any material blessing, and—most striking of all—it is addressed to no personal god. It is pure prayer.

If I hesitated a few pages back to accept the opinion that without qualification fourth-century Christianity was the progressive force in religion and philosophic Paganism the non-progressive, it was partly because of this prayer and some

others like it, which seem to me to represent a stage of religion very high indeed, and as fit for the twentieth century as for the fourth. It was partly because of another consideration, possibly of very great importance, perhaps of none. I cannot pretend to make up my mind on the point.

There is current at the present day a great deal of religious and semi-religious thought of a partly sceptical, partly mystical character. It is mystical and spiritualist to the verge of superstition ; it is sceptical in that it mostly rejects traditional myths and creeds. We find it rampantly successful in Christian Science, and to a less degree in theosophy ; we find it in more philosophic shape in the mysticism of the subliminal soul, as expounded best in Frederick Myers's book on Human Personality ; more philosophic still in some developements of Hegelianism and of Pragmatism, and the speculations of followers of Bergson. Some readers will remember that Professor William James, when lecturing in Oxford, hazarded the opinion that the future of European religion lay in this direction. As I heard him, I could not help thinking that the systems which he sketched and the general trend of thought which he laid sympathetically before us joined, in point of developement, much more closely to the system and spirit of Sallustius and Plotinus than to that of the Gospels and Epistles.

Perhaps Professor James would repudiate so "thin" an ally as Sallustius. That brilliant and persuasive philosopher suffers from a conscientious objection to the classics. Perhaps the spirit of Sallustius is at this moment gnashing shadowy teeth behind my back at the suggestion of a connection with M. Bergson. But it would be an interesting, and by no means an unparalleled developement, if a religious system which has lain for centuries dead, and its dust scarcely troubled, should rise again to be of some use to the forward groping of mankind. A system like that of Sallustius was not made without much noble life and strenuous thought and a steady passion for the knowledge of God ; things of that make do not, as a rule, die for ever.

The Starveling Poet

By Edwin Pugh

FEATHERFEW awoke with a start, sat up in his narrow bed, and at last realised what was the matter with him. He was hungry.

All night he had been dreaming of food. Of homely boards lavishly spread with smoking viands. Of banqueting-halls crowded with long tables, all covered with rare appetising dishes and crowned with flowers and aglitter with goblets of red and golden wine. Of pastry-cooks' shops through which he wandered at his will amid a very labyrinth of vast trays whereon were displayed, in rows and piles, savoury pies and succulent jellies and rich juicy tarts and many other kinds of delicate fairy cates. Of orchards in which the ripe, sun-kissed fruits hung and clustered on a level with his eyes, heavy and luscious and bursting with sweetness. Of confectioners' shops that wooed him to recapture the half-forgotten boyish joys of plugging a sweet tooth with the most delectable candies and drops and pastilles. Of vast railway termini set about with towering automatic machines advertising an inexhaustible store of things good to eat, such as he had never suspected those mechanical deviltries of containing. From vision to vision he had passed, ever longing, ever on the point of satisfying his longing, and ever disappointed at the crucial moment by some untoward mischance. He waited at the homely boards for other guests who never came. He sat in the seat of honour under the crossed flags in the banqueting-halls whilst an endless procession of brilliant, cosmopolitan plenipotentiaries defiled before him, kissing his hand and striving to soothe his soul with subtle flatteries of speech and glance whilst all the time his ignoble inner man fumed and fretted to be at the more gross feeding. In the pastry-cooks' shops he was a starving beggar and outcast, suspect of watchful, eagle-eyed attendants, under whose vigilant stern regard he dared not snatch one surreptitious tasty morsel lest overwhelming disgrace and exposure befall him. Barbed-wire entanglements cumbered his feet and hampered his movements in the orchards, so that as soon as he extricated himself from one clinging obstacle he was involved in another, and

could never free his limbs long enough to raise his arms and pluck even one of the ripe apples or pears or plums or cherries that dangled tantalisingly near his lips. The sweetmeats were all swathed in endless intricate wrappings of paper and silverfoil that he tore off, one after another, till they strewed the floor about him, ankle-deep, knee-deep, mounting higher and higher about his middle to his neck, at last threatening to submerge him altogether, and then . . . became the ravelled edge of his patch-work counterpane. And those lofty, phantasmal automatic machines he could only approach by means of an everlasting staircase that for ever grew and mounted up and unfolded new vistas before his eyes, faster than he could set his foot on each succeeding step. Indeed, so intolerable had the mocking torment of his dreams become that he awoke from his long train of barmecide feasts to the drear reality of his squalid bed-sitting-room and the cold consciousness of a hopeless vain longing, with a feeling of half-sad, half-glad relief.

The thin spring sunshine filtered in through the window, and traced a faint murky pattern on the floor. His breath hung in a cloud before his face, that drifted into the pale ray of morning light and mingled with the gleaming dust-motes. He bent forward and seized his trousers that hung over the foot of his bed and groped in the pockets. Two of them contained nothing but holes and the third only a bunch of keys, as he had known beforehand. Then he went through his other garments, one by one; and they, too, yielded nothing in the way of lucre. With a groaning sigh he lay down again, drew the counterpane over his head, and straightway began to doze once more.

And now his half-waking dreams were all of money. He found new fantastic pockets in the lining of his raiment, packed with a glittering store of gold. He walked in the public ways; and all along the road, between the tram-lines, he found at regular intervals little *rouleaux* of coins in neatly piled cylinders; and he garnered them in. Other dreams—a whole sequence—he had of a like improbable kind. And in all his dreams he said to himself complacently: "Of course I've often dreamed of finding money before; but this is reality this time." And he did things in his dreams to assure himself that he really was not dreaming at all. And it seemed that he really was not. He argued with himself and was convinced that this was sober, solid actuality at last; a doubtless surprising but indubitably concrete experience.

The morning seemed to have a colder and a colder eye each

time he started from these brief, fitful slumbers. At last the torture became too poignant and he scrambled out of bed.

As he dressed he held consultations with his interior and was surprised by its queer revelations. How hungry he was! He seemed to have been hungry for years, in a mean, pettifogging way. It was none of your tragic last-gasp business, truly; but somehow this chronic state of never having had enough seemed infinitely harder to bear than any romantic death in a desert, with a mirage on the horizon. It was like a toothache in the stomach that you went to bed with, got up with, carried about with you through all the manifold trials and tribulations of the day. A meal, a full unlimited debauch of food, was blessed to the senses as the minute's interval between the rounds of a punishing boxing contest. It was something to look forward to for weeks, to approach reverently, to enjoy with fastidious deliberation, then to look back on as a middle-aged dyspeptic with a hob-nailed liver looks back on the best long quart of beer that ever was brewed in this world. . . .

Featherfew was a genius. Every man who is a genius knows it—and some know it who are not geniuses. Featherfew was one of those men who cannot write poetry, but do. He was in receipt of a small monthly allowance from an unsympathetic uncle who made pensioners of all his poorer relations on the strict understanding that they never came near him; but the great drawback of a monthly allowance is that it is paid monthly, and a month is such a long time to wait. Featherfew found it intolerably long. And every time he received his paltry cheque he was so sure that the last thing he had written would be accepted and royally paid for in a day or two that it never seemed worth while to adopt a cheese-paring policy. Thus he was either living at the rate of five thousand a year—for an hour or two; or pledging his worldly goods again; or mortgaging his future. But this being the last day of the month, Featherfew had neither property to pawn nor any outstanding expectations that he could raise the loan of a shilling on.

And he was hungry! Shades of Pantagruel! how hungry he was!

He roamed about his room, peeping into vases, opening drawers and exploring them, considering his few remaining portables with a calculating eye. But there was nothing—not a stick or a dud—that he felt he could transmute even into copper. There was no fuel in the cupboard, either, no tobacco in the jar, no precious scattered dottels to collect and fill a pipe with. He

drained the contents of his water-bottle and felt exceeding sick.

It was cold in that airy upper chamber. He wished he had stayed in bed. Why had he got up and dressed his misery in clothes? What an impulsive fool he was! The bed at least was warm, and there were dreams in it. At the recollection of those cruel dreams, however, he shook his head mournfully. But how dreadful a thing it was that a man of genius should be so betrayed by his carnal lusts as to become the mere fleshly envelope of a ravening appetite! That a sordid craving for food should have power to obsess his poet's imaginations, even in sleep! He shuddered, with an access of quite proper feeling, and put on his battered, soft hat and picked up his stick.

His stick! He examined it critically. Would the supercilious pawnbroker lend him a few coppers on his stick? It was not beautiful, nor good of its kind. But it had been grasped by the hand of genius! It looked quite as disreputable and ugly as any he remembered to have seen in the Carlyle collection. Yet very possibly a poor, foolish man of the world would boggle at lending even twopence on a stick that future generations might perchance enshrine in a glass case. He wished, for immediate, urgent reasons, it had had a silver handle.

The sun retired behind a purple rampart of cloud as Featherfew emerged on the street. It became at once a bitter, biting, blinding day of shrewish winds and icy showers. His overcoat had gone the way of all his dispensable belongings. The cold air tweaked his nose and brought the tears to his eyes. He did not feel, and—what was far worse!—he felt that he did not look, romantic. He walked briskly, to get some warmth into his vitals; and all he acquired was a keener edge to his appetite.

He passed by an old grey building, and on the green sward within the tall iron gate a fair girl was feeding some pigeons with pieces of a large plum-cake which she crumbled carelessly between her fingers. His spirit ached with envy of the birds as he glared hungrily in between the bars like a wolf in a cage. In that instant he became a red revolutionary, ripe for insurrection, the barricade, and organisation of looting-parties.

A faintly sweet, hot smell of baking bread puffed up at him through an iron grating. He thought of crisp, crusty rolls and a wedge of yellow cheese and pickles.

He passed by a provision store and a spicy whiff tickled his nostrils. A vision was conjured up in his distracted brain of pork pies, veal pies, mutton pies, of sausages, tinned meats and

tinned fish, of brawn and corned beef and tongue curling smoothly away from under the taper blade of a glistening knife.

That vision faded away before the glorious spectacle of a hawker's barrow heaped high with bananas. Bananas are good —how good! To strip off that greenish yellow husk and set the teeth in the creamy flesh of the fruit. . . .

He pulled up before a big sweetstuff shop and remembered that milk-chocolate and sugar-almonds and marzipan and tutti-frutti had all their several virtues.

He lingered near the entrance of A Good Pull Up for Carmen —a common coffee-shop, redolent of bloaters and rancid vegetables and fumy soups and greasy stews and the sour, milky odour of suet-puddings. But even such humble fare as this is not to be despised when one is unusually sharp-set, as Featherfew was.

The morning merged into afternoon and he grew weary and languid and light-headed. He began to feel that if he did not dine—and that soon—he should go mad. He stole an apple off a stall; there was proof of his moral degeneracy already. But though outwardly fair it was inwardly rotten. After one disgusting mouthful he flung it away; and had wasted a sin.

Then it was that the amazing, the unparalleled, the entirely and altogether miraculous thing happened.

He had hesitated at a corner, looking aimlessly about, and his dejected, downcast gaze had lighted on a sullied silvery disc in the fat oozy mud of the gutter. It looked like a sixpence. He stooped. It was a sixpence. He cast a hurried glance around, bent down quickly, and grasped the coin. Yet it was hard and tangible. He could feel the milled edge with his fingers. Dreaming again? Was this also a dream? Oh, it could not be! But . . . those other dreams had seemed not to be dreams when he gravely reviewed them in his sleep. But this . . . this could not . . . could not be a dream. His eyes were open. He could open them no wider. He could not turn over, or cast off any bedclothes, or sit up, or disillusionise himself in any way. He must be . . . he was . . . awake! The sixpence was a concrete reality. And a meal was an imminent consummation. . . .

He spent the sixpence very wisely and prudently and frugally. He bought half a pound of German sausage—the red, pungent kind that, cut thin, makes a magnificent show for threepence and likewise fulfils its mission in the scheme of things very completely and efficiently. He bought a pennyworth of pease-pudding, which is both filling and cheap; and half a stale loaf

which, being rather chirky and hard to masticate, contains a rare deal of slightly dull and uninteresting food-stuffs. And—his one flight of extravagance—he bought a screw of bird's-eye; but a man must have his postprandial pipe. With these assorted items of provender bestowed about his person he scuttled back to the barracky block of model dwellings in which he had his lodging; and went trembling with eagerness and excitement up the stone stairs.

It was very gloomy and cold and comfortless on those stairs. On each landing the darkness was made visible by one small oblong hole, high up in the massive wall, through which a feather of faded grey light trickled down upon the dirty, puddled stone flooring. All manner of odds and ends of wind-drift and miscellaneous rubbish, and sometimes of waste humanity too, floated up those cold stairs to find bleak anchorage and shelter on the landings. Featherfew had quite a retinue of retainers and hangers-on and pensioners who haunted the landing just outside his door at such times as he was in clover, when his hospitality overflowed to include all his fellows. But the recipients of his bounty had got to know when his cheque fell due and so he rarely saw any of them after the first few days of the month.

Yet here, on the last day of the month, was a group of three children—one old woman of eight or nine and two wizen, swollen-headed babes—ensconced against his door.

"'Ere y'are, then, at last!" cried the aged child, with a touch of asperity. "Thought you'd gone out for the day, enjoyin' of yourself."

Featherfew, with a terrible misgiving pricking at his heart, replied in a faltering voice: "Enjoying myself, my dear? . . . on the last day of the month?"

"The whatter?" she demanded.

"The last day of the month," he repeated firmly.

She stared up at him with eyes from which all expression seemed drained away, and then down at the two elfin-faced babes, her charges. Some subtle nuance of expression in her voice and face caused them suddenly to begin to weep and wail forlornly. Featherfew stood at gaze and felt like a hired assassin.

"Meantersay——?" gasped the mother-child in a parched voice. "Made a mistake?"

"Yes, my dear, but——"

"'Ush, you two!" She dabbed at their tousled heads perfunctorily. Two big, round, crystalline tears toppled for an

instant on the lower edges of her eyelids and then splashed on the ground.

"Don't cry!" murmured Featherfew. "There's nothing in the world worth that."

"I ain't a-cryin'. Think I'm a kid, or what?" she said.

"Don't tell lies. You are," growled Featherfew.

"What if I am, then!" she exclaimed passionlessly. "If you was as hungry as these 'ere kids you'd cry, I reckon."

"How dare you be hungry—any of you!"

"Oh, you fool! D'ye think we can 'elp it?" she answered with great scorn.

"Never you mind whether you can help it or not. Don't you talk to me about it, that's all. I've got a spiffin dinner in my pockets—sausage, and pease-pudding, and bread, and every-thing. When you talk to me about being hungry you take away my appetite. I call that mean of you, Maria. I wouldn't take away a fellow's appetite—unless, of course, I thought he couldn't very well afford to keep one."

Now Maria wept copiously.

"What d'ye wanter come an' bully me like this for?" she spluttered. "I ain't done nothin' t'you, 'ave I?"

"Yes, you have. You've taken away my appetite. You've spoilt my dinner. Is this landing the only place in the world? Am I the only man you can talk to? Aren't there great navvy-fellows, dropping fatness, that you could tell you were hungry?"

"I didn't go to do it on pu'pose, Mist' Featherfew. I thought we was pals, I did." She laid a grimy paw on his sleeve. The two babes hushed their lamentation to listen. "Mist' Featherfew," said Maria, "would ye mind callin' of that sossinger an' them other things over agin? I like to 'ear about all that there prime grub. It's the next best thing to a-eatin' of it. . . . Now, you two!"

"What?"

"I wish ye would, Mist' Featherfew."

"Well, I wont. That's flat. But," and an agonised look of inward struggle convulsed his features, "I've a thundering good mind to. . . . No, I won't though. Why should I? . . . Yes. I will. . . . I'll punish you for coming and spoiling my dinner by making you three eat up every scrap of it. . . . Shall I?"

"Oh, Mist' Featherfew!" Maria licked her lips ecstatically. The babes' eyes goggled. Suddenly the girl-mother's face changed. "'Ere, but I say," she cried; "there ain't nothing wrong wi' the grub, is there?"

"Certainly not!"

"'Cos o' the kids, y'know. They're delekit like. 'M! An' yet you don't want it—hey? Couldn't eat it, in fact?"

"N-no," quavered Featherfew. "Though, mind you, I don't say I may not pick a bit of the bread . . . and, of course, there's the 'bacca. . . ."

"Well," cried the girl-mother, with a sniff of derision; "that gets over me, that does. But praise the Lord for a genteel stummick! But you're a bigger mug'n I thought you was, Mist' Featherfew, if poss. Fancy me a-chuckin' away a fust-class spread like that. But the kids 'll 'preciate it. Come on, you two! Lead the way, Mist' Featherfew. I'm on this, I am. . . . Come along."

Letters from America

By G. Lowes Dickinson

V. "THE MODERN PULPIT"

It is a bright July morning. As I sit in the garden I look out, over a tangle of wild roses, to a calm sea and a flock of white sails. Everything invites to happy thought and innocent contemplation. Moreover, it is the day of rest, and every one is at leisure to turn his mind towards pleasant things. To what, in fact, are most people on this continent turning theirs? To this, which I hold in my hand, the Sunday newspaper.

Let us analyse this production, peculiar to the New World. It comprises eight sections, and eighty-eight pages, and very likely does really, as it boasts, contain "more reading-matter than the whole Bible."

Opening section 1, I read the following headings:

"Baron shot at; bank-teller ends life with bullet."
"Two fatally hurt in strike riots at Pittsburg."
"Steals a look at busy burglars."
"Drown in surf at Narragansett."
"Four of a family fear a dogs' bite (*sic*)."
"Two are dead, two dying; fought over cow."

Section 2 appears to be concerned with similar matter. For example,

"Struck by blast, woman is dying."
"Hard shell crabs help in giving burglar alarm."

But here I notice further the interesting and enigmatic heading,

"Will 'boost' not 'knock' New York,"

and roused for the first time to something like curiosity, read: "To lock horns with the muckrakes and to defend New York against all who defame and censure it the Association of New York was incorporated yesterday."

I notice also "Conferences agree to short rates on woollen goods" and am reminded of the shameless bargaining of which, for many weeks past, Washington has been the centre; which

leads me to reflect on the political advantages of a Tariff and its wholesome effect on the national life.

There is also, I must confess, one heading here for which I shall always be grateful. It runs: "Man who has been married three times denies the existence of God." Certainly America has a sense of humour.

Section 3 deals with aviation and seaside resorts.

"Brave Lake Placid," I read, "planning new hotel."

"Haines Falls entertaining a great throng of people."

"Resound with the laughter and shout of summer throngs."

Section 4 consists entirely of advertisements.

"Tuning-up Sale," I read. "Buff-and-crimson cards will mark the trail of all goods ready for the sale. We are tuning up. By September it is our intention to have assembled in these two great buildings the most fashionable merchandise ever shown. No one piece of goods will be permitted to linger that lacks, in any detail, the æsthetic beauty demanded by New York women of fashion. Everything will be better and a definite percentage lower in price than New York will find in any other store. Do not expect a sale of ordinary proportions. To-morrow you will find the store alive with enthusiasm. This is not a summer hurrah." And so on, to the end of the page. Twelve pages of advertisements, uninterrupted by any item of news.

Section 5 is devoted to automobile gossip and automobile advertisements.

Thereupon follows the *Special Sporting Section.*

"Rumsom Freebooters defeat Devon's first."

"'Young Corbett' is chipped in the 8th."

"Doggett and Cubs each win shut out."

"Brockett is easy for Detroit Nine."

Glancing at the small type, I read:

"Englewood was the first to tally. This was in the fourth inning. W. Merritt, the first man up, was safe on Williams' error, and he got round to third on another miscue by Williams. Charley Clough was on deck with a timely single, which scored Merritt. Curran's out at first put Clough on third, from whence he tallied on Cuming's single. Cuming got to second, when Wiley grounded out along the first base line and scored on Reinmund's single. Every other time Reinmund came to the bat he struck out."

Noting, incidentally, that I do not understand the American language, I pass to the next section. This is called "Comic,"

and consists of little stories told by the medium of coloured pictures. I do not find it amusing, but that, no doubt, is because, as every American knows, the English have no sense of humour. You may be more fortunate, and I offer you the headings.

"Monkey shines of Marsellene."
"The terrors of the tiny Tads."
"Buster Brown's Baseball Team."

Buster Brown, I understand, is a famous personage, and likely before long to appear on the New York stage. But I cannot here introduce him to you, because he only exists in picture form. I am informed that he goes the round of the Sunday papers and has been figuring for the last ten years.

I pass therefore to the *Magazine Section.*

On the first page is the mysterious heading: "E. of E. and K." Several huge portraits of a bald clean-shaven man in shirt-sleeves partially explain. E. is Mr. Erlanger, a theatrical impresario, and E. and K. presumably is his firm. The article describes "the accomplishment of a busy man on one of his ordinary days," and makes one hope no day is ever extraordinary. The interviewer who tells about him is almost speechless with emotion. He searches for a phrase to express his feelings, finds it at last, and comes triumphantly to his close—Mr. Erlanger is a man "with trained arms, trained legs, a trained body and a trained mind." There follows "A Fairy-tale Princess: The story of a society girl," in which we are told "there is a confession of love and the startling discovery that Dolly was a professional model"; "The Doctor's story," with a picture of a corpse, "whose white shapely hands were clasped one over the other"; and "Would you convict on circumstantial evidence?—A scaffold confession. A true story." I glance at this, and read, "While the crowd watched in strained, breathless silence there came a sharp agonised voice and a commotion near the steps of the scaffold. 'Stop! Stop! The man is not guilty. I mean it. It is I who should stand there. Let me speak.'" You can now reconstruct the story for yourself. Next comes "Get the Man! Craft and courage of old-time and modern express robbers matched by organised secret service and the mandate that makes capture alone the end of an unflagging man-hunt." This is accompanied by portraits of famous detectives and train-robbers.

There follows *Thrilling Lines*, with a picture of a man who seems to be looping the loop on a bicycle.

And the conclusion of the section is a poem, entitled

"Cynthianna Blythe," with coloured illustrations, apparently intended for children, and certainly successful in not appealing to adults.

Comment, I suppose, is superfluous. But it is only fair to say that the whole of the Press of America is not of this character. Among the thousands of papers daily produced on that continent it would be possible, I believe, to name ten—I myself could mention five—which contain in almost every issue some piece of information or comment which an intelligent man might care to peruse. There are to be found, now and again, passing references to European and even to Asiatic politics; for it cannot be said that the Press of America wholly ignored the recent revolutions in Persia and in Turkey. I myself saw a reference to the new Sultan as a man "fat, but not fleshy." England looms big enough on the American horizon to be treated to an occasional gibe; and the doings of fashionable Americans in London are reported somewhat fully. Still, on the whole, the American daily Press is typified by the specimen I have analysed. Sensations, personalities and fiction are its stock-in-trade. Why? The causes are well known, but are worth recapitulating, for they are part of the system of modern civilisation.

The newspaper Press is a business, intended to make money. This is its primary aim, which may, or may not, include the subordinate purpose of advocating some line of public policy. Now to make money it is essential to secure advertisements; and to secure advertisements it is essential to have a large circulation. But a large circulation can only be attained by lowering the price of the paper, and adapting it to the leisure mood of the mass of people. But this leisure mood is usually one of sheer vacuity, incapable of intellectual effort or imaginative response. The man is there, waiting to be filled, and to be filled with the stuff easiest to digest. The rest follows. The newspapers supply the demand, and by supplying it extend and perpetuate it. Among the possible appeals open to them they deliberately choose the lowest. For people are capable of Good as well as of Bad, and if they cannot get the Bad they will sometimes take the Good. Newspapers, probably, could exist, even under democratic conditions, maintaining a certain standard of intelligence and morals. But it is easier to exist on melodrama, fatuity and sport. And one or two papers adopting that course force the others into line, for here, as in most departments of modern life, "The Bad drives out the Good." This process of deterioration of the Press is proceeding rapidly in

England, with the advent of the halfpenny newspaper. It has not gone as far as in America, but there is no reason why it should not, and every reason why it should ; for the same causes are at work.

I have called the process "deterioration," but that, of course, is matter of opinion. A Cabinet Minister at the recent Conference in London is reported to have congratulated the Press on its progressive improvement during recent years. And Lord Northcliffe is a peer. The more the English Press approximates to the American, the more, it would seem, it may hope for public esteem and honour. And that is natural, for the American method pays.

Well, the sun still shines and the sky is still blue. But between it and the American people stretches a veil of printed paper. Curious ! the fathers of this nation read nothing but the Bible. That too, it may be said, was a veil ; but a veil woven of apocalyptic visions, of lightning and storm, of Leviathan and the wrath of Jehovah. What is the stuff of the modern veil we have seen. And surely the contrast is calculated to evoke curious reflections. Mine, as usual, run back into the economic structure of society, and the advantages of the principle of supply and demand when applied to the things of the mind. But I will spare you a sermon on that head. There is nothing to be said that has not been said a thousand times. And no one is going to pay any attention to it.

VI. RED-BLOODS AND MOLLYCODDLES.

I am staying at a pleasant place in New Hampshire. The country is hilly and wooded, like a larger and wilder Surrey ; and through it flows what, to an Englishman, seems a large river, the Connecticut. Charming villas are dotted about, well designed and secluded in pretty gardens. I mention this because, in my experience of America, it is unique. Almost everywhere the houses stare blankly at one another and at the public roads, ugly, unsheltered and unashamed, as much as to say, "Every one is welcome to see what goes on here. We court publicity. See how we eat, drink and sleep. Our private life is the property of the American people." It was not, however, to describe the country that I began this letter, but to acquaint you with a generalisation developed by my host and myself which I find amusing and even illuminating.

We have divided Men into Red-bloods and Mollycoddles. "A Red-blood man" is a common American phrase which

explains itself. "Mollycoddle" is its opposite. We have adopted it from a famous speech of Mr. Roosevelt, and redeemed it for nobler uses. A few examples will make the notion clear. Mr. Roosevelt himself is a typical Red-blood; so was Bismarck; so was Cecil Rhodes; so is Mr. Joseph Chamberlain. On the other hand, typical Mollycoddles were Socrates, Voltaire, and Shelley, The terms, you will observe, are comprehensive, and the types very broad. Generally speaking, men of action are Red-bloods. Not but what the Mollycoddle may act, and act efficiently. But, if so, he acts from principle, not from the instinct of action. The Red-blood, on the other hand, acts as the stone falls, and does indiscriminately anything that comes to hand. It is thus he that carries on the business of the world. He steps without reflection into the first place offered him, and goes to work like a machine. The ideals and standards of his family, his class, his city, his country, and his age, he swallows as naturally as he swallows food and drink. He is, therefore, always "in the swim," and he is bound to "arrive," because he has set before himself the attainable. You will find him everywhere in all the prominent positions. In a military age he is a soldier; in a commercial age, a business man. He hates his enemies, and he may love his friends, but he does not require friends to love. A wife and children he does require, for the instinct to propagate the race is as strong in him as all other instincts. His domestic life, however, is not always happy; for he can never understand his wife. This is part of his general incapacity to understand any point of view but his own. He is incapable of an idea and contemptuous of a principle. He is the Samson, the blind force, dearest to Nature of her children. He neither looks back nor looks ahead. He lives in present action. And when he can no longer act, he loses his reason for existence. The Red-blood is happiest if he dies in the prime of life; otherwise, he may easily end with suicide. For he has no inner life; and when the outer life fails, he can only fail with it. The instinct that animated him dead, he dies too. Nature, who has blown through him, blows elsewhere. His stops are dumb; he is dead wood on the shore.

The Mollycoddle, on the other hand, is all inner life. He may indeed act, as I said, but he acts, so to speak, by accident; just as the Red-blood may reflect, but reflects by accident. The Mollycoddle in action is the Crank; it is he who accomplishes reforms; who abolished slavery, for example, and reformed prisons and lunatic asylums. Still, primarily, the Mollycoddle is a critic, not a man of action. He challenges all standards and all facts. If an institution is established, that is a

reason why he will not accept it ; if an idea is current, that is a reason why he should repudiate it. He questions everything, including life and the universe. And for that reason Nature hates him. On the Red-blood she heaps her favours ; she gives him a good digestion, a clear complexion, and sound nerves. But to the Mollycoddle she apportions dyspepsia and black bile. In the universe and in society the Mollycoddle is "out of it" as inevitably as the Red-blood is "in it." At school, he is a "smug" or a "swat," while the Red-blood is captain of the Eleven. At College, he is an "intellectual," while the Red-blood is in the "best set." In the world, he courts failure while the Red-blood achieves success. The Red-blood sees nothing ; but the Mollycoddle sees through everything. The Red-blood joins societies ; the Mollycoddle is a non-joiner. Individualist of individualists, he can only stand alone, while the Red-blood requires the support of a crowd. The Mollycoddle engenders ideas, and the Red-blood exploits them. The Mollycoddle discovers, and the Red-blood invents. The whole structure of civilisation rests on foundations laid by Mollycoddles ; but all the building is done by Red-bloods. The Red-blood despises the Mollycoddle ; but, in the long run, he does what the Mollycoddle tells him. The Mollycoddle also despises the Red-blood ; but he cannot do without him. Each thinks he is master of the other, and, in a sense, each is right. In his life-time the Mollycoddle may be the slave of the Red-blood ; but after his death, he is his master, though the Red-blood know it not.

To avoid confusion, it should here be observed that there is a kind of Mollycoddle who tries to pass as a Red-blood. This we call the parasitic Mollycoddle. He may be distinguished from the true Red-blood by the fact that he expresses the Red-blood's point of view. Nietzsche, for example, was a parasitic Mollycoddle ; Carlyle, I fear, inclined a little to the type ; and it would be easy to name eminent contemporaries, were I not anxious to avoid controversy. It is indeed, a rather grave symptom of our age that Mollycoddles show a tendency to parasitism. This is their decadence. The true Mollycoddle is the foe of the Red-blood, but an open and honourable foe. He would scorn to steal the armour and flaunt the flag of the enemy. The decadence of Mollycoddles is a sign of the decadence of a nation. Let us pray that our England may be preserved from such a fate !

There does not appear to be such a thing as a parasitic Red-blood. It would, indeed, be a contradiction in terms. For it

would imply in the Red-blood the capacity to see another point of view, and to be dissatisfied with his own. The Red-blood is saved from infamy by his stupidity.

Nations, like men, may be classified roughly as Red-blood and Mollycoddle. To the latter class belong clearly the ancient Greeks, the Italians, the French, and probably the Russians; to the former the Romans, the Germans and the English. But the Red-blood nation *par excellence* is the American; so that, in comparison with them, Europe as a whole might almost be called Mollycoddle. This characteristic of Americans is reflected in the predominant physical type—the great jaw and chin, the huge teeth, and predatory mouth; in their speech, where beauty and distinction are sacrificed to force; in their need to live and feel and act in masses. To be born a Mollycoddle in America is to be born to a hard fate. You must either emigrate or succumb. This at least hitherto has been the alternative practised. Whether a Mollycoddle will ever be produced strong enough to breathe the American atmosphere and live is a crucial question for the future. It is the question whether America will ever be civilised. For civilisation, you will have perceived, depends on a just balance of Red-bloods and Mollycoddles. Without the Red-blood there would be no life at all, no stuff, so to speak, for the Mollycoddle to work upon; without the Mollycoddle, the stuff would remain shapeless and chaotic. The Red-blood is the matter, the Mollycoddle the form; the Red-blood the dough, the Mollycoddle the yeast. On these two poles turns the orb of human society. And if, at this point, you choose to say that poles are points and have no dimensions, that strictly neither the Mollycoddle nor the Red-blood exist, and that real men contain elements of both mixed in different proportions, I have no quarrel with you except such as one has with the man who states the obvious. I am satisfied to have distinguished the ideal extremes between which the Actual vibrates, to have initiated the Pure Science of Human Nature. The detailed application of the conception, the quantitative analysis, I prefer to leave to more pedestrian researchers.

One point more before I close. This dichotomy, so far as I can see, applies only to man. Woman appears to be a kind of hybrid. Regarded as a creature of instinct, she resembles the Red-blood, and it is to him that she is first attracted. The hero of her youth is the athlete, the soldier, the successful man of business; and this predilection of hers accounts for much of human history, and in particular for the maintenance of the military spirit. On the other hand, as a creature capable of and craving

sympathy, she has affinities with the Mollycoddle. This dual nature is the tragedy of her life. The Red-blood awakens her passion, but cannot satisfy it. He wins her by his virility, but cannot retain her by his perception. Hence the fact, noted by a cynic, that it is the Mollycoddle who cuckolds the Red-blood. For the woman married to the Red-blood discovers too late that she is to him only a trophy, a scalp. He hangs her up in the hall and goes about his business. Then comes the Mollycoddle, divining all, possessing and offering all. And if the Red-blood is an American, and the Mollycoddle a European, then the situation is tense indeed. For the American Red-blood despises woman in his heart as profoundly as he respects her in outer observance. He despises her because of the Mollycoddle he suspects in her. Therefore he never understands her; and that is why European Mollycoddles carry off American women before the very eyes of the exasperated Red-blood. "Am I not clean?" he cries. "Am I not healthy? Am I not athletic and efficient?" He is, but it does not help him, except with young girls. He may win the body, but he cannot win the soul.

To win the soul he must become a Mollycoddle without ceasing to be a Red-blood. That is what woman wants. She will not rest till she gets it. And because she does not get it, she is a Suffragette.

VII. ADVERTISEMENT

The last two days and nights I spent in a railway train. We passed through some beautiful country; that, I believe, is the fact; but my feeling is that I have emerged from a nightmare. In my mind is a jumbled vision of huge wooden cows cut out in profile and offering from dry udders a fibrous milk; of tins of biscuits portrayed with a ghastly realism of perspective, and mendaciously screaming that I needed them—*U-need-a* biscuit; of gigantic quakers, multiplied as in an interminable series of mirrors and offering me a myriad meals of indigestible oats; of huge painted bulls in a kind of discontinuous freize bellowing to the heavens a challenge to produce a better tobacco than theirs; of the head of a gentleman, with pink cheeks and a black moustache, recurring, like a decimal, *ad infinitum* on the top of a board, to inform me that his beauty is the product of his own toilet-powder; of cod-fish without bones—"the kind you have always bought"; of bacon packed in glass jars; of whiz suspenders, sen-sen, throat-ease, sure-fit hose, and the whole army of patent medicines. By river, wood, and meadow, hamlet or city, mountain or plain, hovers and flits this obscene host; never to be

escaped from, never to be forgotten; fixing, with inexorable determination, a fancy that might be tempted to roam to that one fundamental fact of life, the operation of the bowels.

Nor, of course, are these incubi, these ghostly emanations of the One God, Trade, confined to the American continent. They haunt with equal pertinacity the lovelier landscapes of my own dear country; they line the route to Venice; they squat on the Alps and float on the Rhine; they are beginning to occupy the very air, and with the advent of the airship they will obliterate the moon and the stars and scatter over every lonely moor and solitary mountain peak memorials of the stomach, of the liver and the lungs. Never, in effect, says modern business to the soul of man, never and nowhere shall you forget that you are nothing but a body; that you require to eat, to salivate, to digest, to evacuate; that you are liable to arthritis, blood-poisoning, catarrh, colitis, calvity, constipation, consumption, diarrhœa, diabetes, dysmenorrhœa, epilepsy, eczema, fatty degeneration, gout, goitre, gastritis, headache, hæmorrhage, hysteria, hypertrophy, idiocy, indigestion, jaundice, lock-jaw, melancholia, neuralgia, ophthalmia, phthisis, quinsey, rheumatism, rickets, sciatica, syphilis, tonsilitis, tic douloureux, and so on to the end of the alphabet and back again to the beginning. Never and nowhere shall you forget that you are a trading animal buying in the cheapest and selling in the dearest market. Never shall you forget that nothing matters—nothing in the whole universe—except the maintenance and extension of industry; that beauty, peace, harmony are not commercial values, and cannot be allowed for a moment to stand in the way of the advance of trade; that nothing, in short, matters except wealth, and that there is no wealth except money in the pocket. This—did it ever occur to you?—is the real public education every country is giving, on every hoarding and sky-sign, to its citizens of every age, at every moment of their lives. And that being so, is it not a little ironical that children should be taught for half an hour in school to read a poem of Wordsworth or a play of Shakespeare, when for the rest of the twenty-four hours there is being photographed on their minds the ubiquitous literature of Owbridge and Carter?

But of course advertisement cannot be interfered with! It is the life-blood of the nation. All traders, all politicians, all journalists say so. They sometimes add that it is really, to an unprejudiced spirit, beautiful and elevating. Thus only this morning I came across an article in a leading New York newspaper, which remarks that: "The individual advertisement is commonly in good taste, both in legend and in illustration.

Many are positively beautiful; and as a wit has truly said, the cereal advertisements in the magazines are far more interesting than the serial stories." This latter statement I can easily believe; but when I read the former there flitted across my mind a picture of a lady lightly clad reclining asleep against an open window, a full moon rising in the distance over a lake, with the legend attached, " Cascarella—it works while you sleep."

The article from which I have quoted is interesting not only as illustrating the diversity of taste, but as indicating the high degree of developement which has now been attained by what is at once the art and the science of advertisement. " The study of advertisement," it begins, " seems to have a perennial charm for the American public. Hardly a month passes but some magazine finds a new and inviting phase of this modern art to lay before its readers. The solid literature of advertisement is also growing rapidly. . . . The technique of the subject is almost as extensive as that of scientific agriculture. Whole volumes have been compiled on the art of writing advertisements. Commercial schools and colleges devote courses of study to the subject. Indeed, the corner-stone of the curriculum of a well-known business college is an elective upon 'Window-dressing.'" That you may be under no misapprehension, I must add that this article appears in what is admittedly the most serious and respectable of the New York newspapers; and that it is not conceived in the spirit of irony or hyperbole. To the American, advertisement is a serious, important and elevating department of business; and those who make it their speciality endeavour to base their operations on a profound study of human nature. One of these gentlemen has recently expounded, in a leading monthly review, the whole philosophy of his liberal profession. He calls his article " Imagination in business "; and I remark incidentally that the use of the word " imagination," like that of art, in this connection, shows where the inquirer ought to look for the manifestation, on this continent, of the æsthetic spirit. " The imaginative man," says the writer, " sends his thought through all the instincts, passions and prejudices of men, he knows their desires and their regrets, he knows every human weakness and its sure decoy." It is this latter clause that is relevant to his theme. Poets in earlier ages wrote epics and dramas, they celebrated the strength and nobility of men; but the poet of the modern world " cleverly builds on the frailties of mankind." Of these the chief is " the inability to throw away an element of value, even though it cannot be utilised." On this great principle is constructed the whole art and science

of advertisement. And my author proceeds to give a series of illustrations "each of which is an actual fact, either in my experience, or of which I have been cognisant." Space permits me to quote only one :

"Many years ago a firm of large retailers of Oriental rugs in this country, the representatives of leading houses in Smyrna and Constantinople, found itself overloaded with goods. The situation was critical, unless a certain part of their stock could be turned over at once. The firm had but one proposition to make, namely, a great sacrifice sale of its smaller sizes of rugs, with a reduction in price of from fifty to sixty per cent. to ensure the movement of at least a thousand rugs, at retail, within a week. An average price on small Oriental rugs—take them as they come—would be $30 to $35. This called for an average loss of profit on each rug of from $15 to $20. But just here imagination was applied, and another course was recommended and adopted, which was based upon the inability of the average person voluntarily to throw away an element of value. This was twenty years ago, and the plan has since lost much through familiarity ; but in those days it was a novelty, and it worked most effectively.

"Briefly, it purp s.d—not to sell rugs, oh dear no !—but to determine the relative advertising merits of the different newspapers of the city in which this house was located. A test was made for six days. Of course the firm was willing to pay something for such information, and so in each paper there was printed a facsimile of a one-dollar bill, made out in the name of the firm, and good during the next six days, to the extent of one dollar, on the purchase of any Oriental rug at their establishment. The imitation one-dollar note was somewhat crude, but in size and general appearance it suggested a dollar bill, and results showed that it was difficult for any persons to regard it in any other light. At least they found it as hard to let it go unused as if it had been, indeed, a genuine dollar. To all intents and purposes it was a one-dollar bill, provided it was spent at a certain store during a certain limit of time, and for a certain article. It seems incredible now, for the experiment was not tried in a large city, yet within three days the volume of rugs sold amounted to the largest total yearly discount limit ; in other words, the greatest discount given in any retail house, if the volume of its sales in one year could be made equal to this total.

"The anticipation of one thousand rugs was far exceeded in the performance, and the week ended with sales of sixteen hundred rugs. On these there had been a total discount of sixteen hundred

dollars, with but little more than the customary daily amount of advertising and a complete saving of the large sacrifice which had at first seemed to the firm to be inevitable. The experiment was a bold one, for, had it failed, the firm must have suffered ten days' delay at a time of pressing necessity. I had faith in the plan, however, because it was founded on a principle of human nature—the inability to throw away an element of value.

"Mark this fact! It was not the price. It never is. It was the *reason* for the price. If, instead of giving the buyer one dollar towards his purchase-money, they had taken twelve dollars off the rug, there might have been sold, perhaps, two hundred of these rugs—scarcely more! But by making one-twelfth as good an offer in a more imaginative form, they sold—not two hundred rugs, but sixteen hundred. That is imagination in business!"

Other examples follow: and the author then proceeds:

"We have now taken two weaknesses in human nature, namely, selfishness and acquisitiveness, and shown the baser use of the imagination in business, which rears its fabric on such weaknesses—using the word "baser" not to imply a moral defect, but merely to designate such usages as are relatively less pleasing than other instances which might be cited. If time afforded, it would be easily possible to select other weaknesses of mankind, and instance how the imagination is employed in such cases; then, to take the reverse of these cases, that is, the traits not in themselves weak or base, but of which advantage is taken; such, for example, as the love of the material or concrete, the reasoning by analogy, the impression of value by quantity, the impression of quality by multiplication of argument, and similar instances.

"It must be remembered always that it is not the price of an article which is important, but the *reason* for the price. This is one of the backbone truths of merchandising, and when once a seller gets a firm hold of this fact, and is able to apply it in its highest efficiency, he can almost devastate the trade. I have seen on more than one occasion the delight with which a retail advertiser first clearly grasps this idea. We can detect something of it in one of the illustrations just used; but now what is the reason which underlies this law? Is it not this: that the argument for the price is the imaginative part of the transaction; the price itself is absolutely unimaginative. Admit that the reason for the price is an important thing in the transaction, and that a high price with a good reason will sell more goods than a

low price with a poor reason, and it is only reaffirming, in another form, the potentiality of the imagination in business."

Further illustration follows: and the author comes to his conclusion in the following remarkable paragraph:

"And now is any apology needed for these illustrations? To some readers, perhaps, they may seem sharp and shrewd, with a little flavour of the pavement. But business is intellectual warfare, a battle of wits—in which one does not repulse solid shot with blank cartridges. It is not a theory, but a condition, which confronts the business man. He takes his medicine as he finds it compounded. It doesn't taste as he would like to have it, but no one asked him what he liked. He isn't picnicking. He's at war. He smiles through the bitter drink, and orders it up for the whole company when his turn comes!"

Was ever a confession so bitter wrung from the very heart of business? In future, when economists dwell upon the advantages of competition, would it not be well for them to add this text to their documents? And is it not more than time that they shall cease estimating the merit of a system merely in terms of material value, and follow Ruskin in judging it by the only thing that really matters, its effect on the quality of life?

Lucy Evans

By Gilbert Cannan

I

She took Ella down into the country with her to stay with her father and mother. They were both in service in little houses in terraces that stood rather mournfully back to back, forming a trough in which a few elder-trees and an occasional American poplar grew obstinately up to the sun, when he could break through the smoke pall that hung ever over the city. Her name was Lucy Evans, of Welsh farming stock in the Wirral, and, having quarrelled with her mother, she had come, raw and inexperienced, to the little house in answer to an advertisement which offered her a good home and six shillings a week, but warned her that there were six children. With the elder children, who were perpetually getting in her way, she quarrelled, but she adored the baby and could keep it easy and quiet in a way that seemed nothing short of miraculous to the harassed mother. It was an odd, shiftless little household, and Lucy would never have stayed there but for the baby. She knew no soul in the city, and her "nights-out" were to her ghastly evenings of lonely wandering through streets, brilliant streets, but cruel, for of all the glittering folk who walked there none knew her or marked her. Men accosted her at times, leering men, or foolish boys. The men she shrank from, remembering vividly, as she looked into their fat faces, the stories she had read of the dangers of city life for young girls. With the boys she would crack jokes, but she was unable to get away from their silliness and conceit. Some of them took her home on such evenings, but finding her, as they thought, cold and unresponsive—she returned their kisses as she returned their jokes—their attentions soon ceased. For long enough she was fond of nothing but the baby—and she would sit for hours hugging it to her breast, kissing it, pressing her coarse red cheek against its thin pale face, biting at its wisps of hair, or letting it suck her finger. There were nights when the baby would not sleep, could not in the bed with

its father and mother, the man bullying, the woman weeping ; and at such times the mother would come to the bottom of the attic stairs with the baby crying in her arms, rocking it, " hushing " at it, crooning, singing wild snatches of old lullabies, and would call to Lucy to take the child. In her arms it was soothed, and she would return to her bed, remove her night-dress, and lie with its dear flesh against hers, its head on her soft arm and its nose burrowing into her breast. So the baby would sleep, and Lucy would lie awake staring into the blackness of the night, afraid to sleep lest she should miss one moment of joy. Downstairs she could hear the unhappy colloquy of man and wife, the stirring of sleepers, muffled cries, grunts, and the scuttering of mice and insects in the lower house—but she heard them all vaguely, for in those night-watches there seemed to be no reality other than the little human thing pressing so close to her. With such moments to break the monotony of toil and friendless days and evenings Lucy was sufficiently content until she met Ella.

Lucy had long admired Ella at a distance : her fine clothes, her wonderfully arranged hair, her refusal to wear black and caps, her escape at the earliest possible moment from the print frock of domestic labour, her haughty treatment of the two little old ladies, her employers, who lived in the house the back door of which faced the back door of Lucy's house, and, when she walked abroad, her little airs and graces—her undulating walk seemed to Lucy the fine flower of town life—things unapproachable, admirable and remote from herself. Seeing Ella arrayed in all her finery, Lucy had wept sorely over her own little coat and skirt and the hat with feathers and roses bought in the village at home—and sometimes in her bedroom she would mimic Ella's walk, and Ella's darting glances, and Ella's hitch of the arms, and tilt her hat at just such an angle, and twist her fringe into little kiss-curls, and plaster them down on her forehead with soap. She bought a necklace of pearl beads for a shilling, because Ella had just such a necklace. Clothes and furs and lace like Ella's she could not buy out of her six shillings a week ; and supposed that the little old ladies paid Ella more liberally. That she should ever know Ella and talk with her seemed impossible. It seemed enough that she should watch her from the upstairs windows or meet her in the street or come upon her in the entry with her lover. This lover—it never occurred to Lucy that there might be more than one—became a pet of her imagination, endowed with princely qualities, unbounded wealth and fair curly hair. Living in this way with Ella and her lover and the baby, Lucy was perfectly happy for some weeks until one morning when the

baby was found in convulsions. Its mother was ill in bed and Lucy was at her wits' end what to do. She hung weeping over the child and then flew through the streets just as she was, in her dirty apron, tousled and untidy, to the doctor's. Luckily, she found the assistant at home, an amiable young man who came with her at once, devoutly praying that none of his acquaintances might see him with this mad weeping woman. They found the baby stiff and blue, with its mouth working, held in a warm bath by its mother, who was desperately pouring cold water over its head. Together they then restored the blood to its body, and the mother was put to bed again, where she lay coughing and exhausted. For a whole week Lucy hardly left the baby, neglecting her work in the house, except to make her master comfortable. He was a thin silent man, and she stood in awe of his wrath. She knew that she must feed him to keep him kind to her poor little mistress, for whom she had great pity, and some respect as the mother of the adored baby. At the end of the week she was told to take the baby out in the sun. She laid it in the old perambulator and wheeled it into the back garden, a little walled square of flagged ground in which privet and some nasturtiums struggled for existence. She was tired and pale with the effort of the week, culminating in a scene with her master, who had come into the kitchen the night before, come in so quietly, like a creeping ghost, that she did not hear him there, but had felt his presence and looked up to find him shaking, tears streaming down his face. He had come to thank her for what she had done, made a clumsy effort towards an offer of money, broke down and plunged out of the room, snivelling, and she heard him stumbling upstairs and into his wife's room.

She sat in the back garden in the sun, pushing the perambulator to and fro, reading a novelette in a blue cover, and musing over it. During the week she had forgotten Ella. Something in the glowing description of the heroine reminded her of the heroine of her romance—"a woman apparently in the early twenties, tall, with a broad white forehead under masses of unruly black hair, and black eyebrows shadowing eyes of the colour of sea-shallows on an August morning." Ella was not really like that, but she might so easily have been, and the dream-Ella was a very elastic person, malleable, moulded to any shape required by romantic circumstance. She looked up from her book and the real Ella stood there, a dazzling vision—Lucy gaped. The vision held out its hand, and Lucy thought of certain words she had heard once in church: "Be not afraid, it is I." What the vision really said was:

"Hullo——"

Lucy jumped to her feet and, staring at Ella's carefully built coiffure, began to pat and pull at her own hair.

"Your 'air's all right. It's pretty."

"I'm in such a muck," said Lucy.

"You're lookin' bad. Thought I 'adn't seen you about lately. Been ill?"

"N-no-o-o. The baby 'ad convulsions and the missus—coughin' and spittin' sickness. So I 'ad to nurse it, poor lamb."

"I never been in a place where there's children. Can't stand 'em—spyin' little beasts, and tell-tales . . ."

"Don't you—don't you like 'em when they're little and soft. Such nice 'ands and feet as they 'ave—an' their nails is lovely."

"Not me. You don't catch me slobbering over a baby, 'cep' it's my own, and then you never know. But I'm not goin' to spoil my figure for nothin'."

Ella stretched her arms and laid her hands behind her head. Lucy admired the trim lines of her heroine's waist and hips under the modish little blue cotton frock. Something in her face struck Ella, who dropped her arms and said:

"My. You *are* pretty."

"Me?"

"Garn! Tell me y' didn't know. There's a chap I know's wild about you."

"Me?"

Lucy blushed and bridled with pleasure.

"When's your night out?"

"To-night. When's yours?"

"Oh, I have all my nights. Catch me in a place where I can't 'ave my evenin's to myself. Come out with me to-night and I'll introjuce you."

"With you . . . ?" The prospect dazzled Lucy; she was a little ashamed to show her keen pleasure and stooped over the baby, who began to cry. She took it in her arms and stood swinging from one foot to the other looking shyly across at Ella.

"Seven o'clock, an' I expect 'e'll take us to the Empire or the 'Ip."

"What's that?"

"The 'Ippodrome Music-hall. My, you are a treat. See you then? Ta-ta."

Ella went smiling saucily and a little maliciously. To cross the entry she lifted up her skirts with a swaggering motion from the hips and Lucy caught a glimpse of a rather thick ankle in a

delicate openwork stocking. She thrust out her foot and looked down at her own thick worsted and heavy shoe. Then, weaving a web of wild adventure with the princely young man and Ella, with all the subtle suggestion of the openwork stocking colouring the dream, she took the baby indoors, laid it on its mother's bed, to whom she gave the four-hourly dose of medicine, and bustled about with her work in the house, singing softly to herself little bird-like ballads, and her songs were all of lovers, peasant lovers, and one was of dead children.

She had all her cleaning done by four, gave the children their tea when they came home from school, bathed the baby and put it to bed, turning the sheets to make rest sweet and fresh for the invalid, whose condition had been made more serious by the baby's illness, made fresh tea and buttered toast for the master when he returned from his office gloomy and morose, and ran whistling and carolling up to the attic where she turned all her clothes out of the tin box which served the joint purpose of wardrobe and dressing-table for her. She decided to wear her blue frock, but decided against the hat of the feathers and roses ; pinned on a little toque of blue feathers, which she had bought after weeks of saving. In the endeavour to achieve an angle of jauntiness she succeeded only in a disreputability which was ridiculously incongruous with her innocent round face and round blue eyes. Her hair was loosely piled on top of her head, and by the time she had reached the kitchen the hat had slipped into a position almost vertical. She looked at herself in the mirror over the dresser among the plates, and she drew on her black cotton gloves, saw the sorriness of her appearance ; tears rose in her eyes, while the corners of her mouth twitched. The Ella ideal seemed more than ever unattainable. She tugged at the hat—but only made matters worse. She seized it with both hands, shook it violently so that her hair began to come down, and then jammed it hard on the top of her head. Loose strands of hair fell over her ears. She stamped her foot and the tears rolled down her cheeks. She saw herself in the mirror growing more and more hideous. In despair she took off the little toque, threw it on the dresser. There was a clatter of hat-pins and hair-pins on to the floor. She sat down, laid her arms out and rolled her head from side to side, sobbing. Then came the sound of a whistle, once—and again, and again. Lucy sat up feeling that her face was swollen and her head aching, turning over and over in her mind what she should do. She couldn't go out like that. Alone she might. But with Ella—and a man ; with Ella's lover. They *would* think her a silly chump. The

whistle came again and she heard the clock in the parlour strike seven : a knock at the door. Lucy stole to the window and peeped out under the blind. There on the step stood Ella—so brilliant, so beautiful, so tidy, nothing out of place, each kiss-curl sitting where it should, where it was placed. Wonderful Ella ! She to go out with Ella, and Ella dressed like that. Why, her fichu alone must have cost quite five shillings !

She watched Ella knock again and tap her foot impatiently—but she did not move. Ella lifted the latch, opened the door and came through the scullery into the kitchen, where she sat down on the edge of a chair bolt upright as she imagined it was polite to do. She looked up at Lucy, who was surveying her in bewildered interest :

" My," she said, " what you been doin' to yourself. Anybody dead ! Never seed such a corp. Aren't you ready ? . . ."

" My—my 'at." It was an effort to Lucy to say it. She threw out a despairing hand in the direction of the dresser, where lay the unfortunate toque.

" Put it on. It's pretty, them feathers. Blue. Match your eyes. Put it on an' come out."

" I—I—can't. It's me 'air." Ella giggled. She made Lucy sit in front of the mirror, and after bathing her eyes with water softened with borax she arranged her hair, curl on curl, stiff, smart ; Lucy watched the growing transformation breathlessly and was on the point of tears when Ella with her own hands twisted little kiss-curls of her brown hair and plastered them down on her forehead. Ella felt the shoulders heaving and shook her, made some joke about " knockin' the men," and Lucy smiled again. On the summit of the erection of hair the toque was balanced at an angle perfectly secure, though it had the required appearance of jeopardy. Lucy surveyed herself with satisfaction, drew on her gloves, laid her little umbrella across her right arm as she had seen Ella do, lifted her skirt and tripped out at the door into the garden. Following her, Ella saw with a smile of approval that she wore openwork stockings. Half-way down the garden Lucy stopped short and turned to Ella with a look of shyness, almost of fear. Ella urged her on, but she stayed giggling and blushing. Ella pushed her ; she hung her head. Ella pushed her again ; she flounced, slapped Ella's arm and giggled as Ella ran down to the gate. She looked back and saw at the dining-room window her master and four of the pasty-faced children staring after the invading Ella. With a little squeal of alarm at the detection she ran through the gate, shutting it after her, and into the arms of a fair young man. He embraced her warmly

and she stepped back quickly on to the foot of another young man whose arm was round Ella's waist. He swore——

"Oh! . . . I'm sorry!"

"I like it, thanks. Do it again," said the young man.

"Introjuce us, Ella," said the fair young man, and Ella went through the ceremony of introduction. The fair young man was Alfred Mace, or so he said with a knowing wink, and the other young man, who had never relaxed his hold of Ella, bore for the time being the name of Gerald Swears.

"And he does," said Ella. Lucy looked with respectful awe at this terrible young man.

Lucy bobbed to both, and the four of them stood there in the dusk. Mr. Swears embracing Ella, and Lucy and Alf standing sheepishly stealing glances at each other.

After a short council, during which Mr. Swears was droll and very waggish, they walked in solemn procession to the tram terminus and were whirled through the streets to the glare of the city, and descended at a vividly illuminated building, at the top of which was a twirling light which spelt H-I-P-P-O-D-R-O-M-E so rapidly and so often that it seemed to Lucy quite marvellous. In her lonely wanderings she had often passed the place and had been awe-struck by the splendour and beauty of the brilliant people—so many Ellas and princes—in the vestibule. For a moment now they stood on the wide pavement. Excitement brought the colour to Lucy's cheeks, her lips parted and her eyes sparkled. Alf was filled with admiration and she felt him nudge her. She turned to him and smiled happily.

"It's a bit thick," he said. "You take my arm while we get inside. You'll get lost else."

She took his arm and he squeezed her hand tight against his side. Several young men of his acquaintance greeted him and gazed admiringly upon Lucy's freshness. Alf held his head higher, stepped more bravely and squeezed Lucy's hand tighter as they marched up the wide red-carpeted staircase. They waited by the swinging door with its formidable array of brass for Mr. Swears to come up with the tickets. He handed the little pieces of green paper with a lordly swagger to a large man in a blue and brown uniform, who took them, tore them in two and returned one portion with such machine-like precision and disregard of Mr. Swears as an individual as to knock all the wind out of the swagger. Fortunately, Mr. Swears was neither perceptive nor sensitive, and he proceeded on his important way. They sat in the front of rows upon rows of hard velvet seats with gilt arms. These were the amphitheatre stalls, and they rose

behind up to the gilt ceiling, with its plaster nymphs and corybantic golden young women of rather full figure. Lucy sat staring at the gilt and marble of the great palace, at the green velvet curtains, at the marble balcony where the orchestra sat scraping and squeaking as they tuned their fiddles, at the rows of red seats on the tilted floor, at the ladies with bare arms and shoulders, and the gentlemen in black coats and white fronts, at the people like funny little black insects hurrying to their seats, but most often at that splendid scornful gentleman, the conductor of the orchestra. Dark hair he had, and deep eyes, pale cheeks—thin cheeks through which the bones thrust—and thin red lips over which he had a little black moustache carefully turned up at the ends. There were rings on his fingers that shone red stones. Lucy had a desire to share this wonder. She turned to Ella, but Ella was engaged in the serious business of keeping Mr. Swears in a good temper : to Alf, but Alf was lighting a cigarette which he took from a little green packet, and studying the programme which he had just bought. Lucy's eyes were drawn again to the conductor. The throng whom the glittering palace had sucked in from the stream in the street were settled in their places, there was the hush of expectancy, the conductor ran his hand with its gleaming rings through his hair, drew on white gloves, looked round the building with that bold eye—it seemed to Lucy that her eyes had met his, that he had seen her and known the thrill in her—raised his baton and brought it down to a crash of music, the opening bars of some thin little waltz which seemed to Lucy warm and passionate. Under the spell of the common little tune, Alf laid his hand on Lucy's knee. She laid her hand on his, and her eyes gazed and gazed at the conductor. Alf thought he was getting on famously.

Through the performance of animals and vulgar men and women, acrobats, jugglers, young ladies who walked on wires and hung head downwards from the roof, through sentimental ditties and songs concerning fleas, lodging-houses, and mothers-in-law, Alf kept Lucy's knee in the cup of his hand and her attention wandered always from the stage to the balcony or the orchestra. Mr. Swears passed a running comment on the performers and seemed to be chiefly interested in the legs of the young women. Lucy heard him saying such things as : " There's an ankle to smack ! "—" My, she's juicy ! "—" By gums, there's legs—like balloons," and she heard Ella shrilly giggling and saw her slap Mr. Swears playfully. Mr. Swears seemed to like it. Occasionally his head appeared round Ella, and he winked

at Alf, who returned the leer. When he did that Lucy disliked Mr. Swears and almost disliked Alf, and she was relieved when, during the interval of the selection by the orchestra, Alf and Mr. Swears retired. As he passed her, Mr. Swears asked Lucy what he should send her. She turned inquiringly to Ella, who said she was going to have a glass of port. With an inward sinking and a feeling of devilish and brave wickedness Lucy said that she also would like a glass of port. Mr. Swears and Alf disappeared, and presently a gorgeous person in a green velvet coat and knee-breeches, both adorned with gold braid, appeared before them with a little tray on which were two glasses of ruby liquor. The gorgeous individual grinned at Ella as at an old friend. Ella took one glass and handed the other to Lucy, at whom the gorgeous individual looked with an appraising eye, for he winked at Ella, nodded his head solemnly in Lucy's direction, laid his finger on his nose, and then passed magnificently away, and was lost behind the smoke-cloud. Ella turned to Lucy.

"What d'yer think of it?"

"It's lovely."

"Not much of a show to-night. Like to go be'ind? Mr. Swears knows all the folk; 'e'll take us if you'd like."

Lucy did not seem enthusiastic. The orchestra had broken out again into banal music. She did not pay much attention to Ella. She sipped her port. She had been rather drunk once at home with gooseberry wine, but that had produced in her nothing like the glow of this red syrup. It ran through her veins, coursing, leaping, and she laughed out loud and began to hum the tune that the orchestra was playing, swaying her body with its rhythm and her feet following the beat of the swinging baton of the romantic, the admirable conductor. She swung her arms and her hands. Thick-fingered and coarse as they were, she swept them gracefully through the air. From her hips up her body undulated with the music. . . . She had a sudden consciousness of the presence of the hundreds of other people, and felt that Ella was staring at her. Her motions stopped dead, she drank, turned to Ella, drank again to the bottom of the glass, and laughed nervously. Ella shook her.

"Don't make a fool of yourself," she said. "You're not used to port wine. Good thing Mr. Swears and Alf wasn't here to see you. Everybody lookin' at you."

"Was they?"

"Such a noise you was makin'!"

"Was I? I didn't know."

Mr. Swears and Alf returned and sat down, Alf by Ella and

Mr. Swears by Lucy. The music died down and the performance proceeded. Both Mr. Swears and Alf devoted themselves to Lucy for the rest of the evening, and Ella sat ogling and charming Mr. Swears in vain. She eventually became sulky, and before the performance was over rose and declared loudly that she was going home and had never, never in her life been so insulted. To avoid a scene Mr. Swears changed his seat and sat again by her, swaggering a little and obviously pleased that his society was of so much account. Ella continued sulky until they had left the gilded music-hall and stood again on the pavement outside.

Lucy asked Mr. Swears the time and, learning that it was after ten, was seized with panic and was for going home at once. Alf demurred. Ella saw that Lucy's cheeks were flushed and her eyes sparkling.

"You go 'ome, Lucy. Alf, you take 'er 'ome. She's not well. Me and Mr. Swears is goin' to see some friends. You go 'ome."

Ella and Mr. Swears disappeared in the throng. Alf took Lucy's arm and conducted her to a tram-car. He was inclined to be resentful at the desertion of the heroic Mr. Swears and did not feel at all at ease with Lucy. He manfully made conversation all the way home, although her responses were confined to a vague "Yes" or "N-no." She was in a chaotic state of mind, and could frame no idea that was not in some way connected with long hair and smouldering eyes, and a queer scent that set her breathing hard, and gave her a shiver. Every now and then she gave a convulsive jump and ended with a violent attack of giggling. Alf was very uncomfortable and, when he left her at the house, kissed her icily and fled into the darkness, swearing.

Lucy found her master waiting up for her. He murmured mild words of reproof. She burst into peals of laughter, threw a dish-clout at him and ran up to bed, where she spent the night sitting up with her chin on her knees softly crooning to herself, weaving fantastic adventure on the summit of a great hill where the conductor, grown to gigantic size, loomed large and made music while she danced. In the end he opened his arms, she was enveloped in the strange perfume—and fell, fell, fell. . . . So she slept.

II

Lucy saw much of Ella in the succeeding weeks, but neither Mr. Swears nor Alf came again.

The girls were not intimate. Lucy's febrile excitements were a mystery to Ella; and to Lucy, with all her perception,

Ella's splendour remained explicable only by the greater generosity of her employers. They visited public dancing-places together, met young men in the parks on evenings when the band played, made excursions into the country on Bank Holidays, and spent one hilarious day at a popular seaside resort, where they scraped acquaintance with two opulent young men, who hired a motor-car and drove them in the early moonlight out to the seashore some miles from the town. They took off their shoes and stockings and played with the sea. . . . Lucy's young man said she was an uncanny little devil and seemed to be afraid of her.

Meanwhile, affairs in the little house were in better case. The baby was entirely recovered, and the little mother was restored to something approaching health. In August, the whole family went to the seaside for a week on the strength of an unexpected subsidy from a rich relative of the husband. They wished to take Lucy with them and approached her on the subject. However, she had arranged with Ella that they should spend their holiday together at her home. A pride of home had seized Lucy, and she wished to show Ella the farm and the great house, and Dick Tenton, and Rover the sheep-dog, and the orchards and the jam factory, the question of employment in which had caused so much unpleasantness between herself and her mother.

Accordingly, when she had despatched the family—the pasty-faced children beaming at the prospect of the sea, and clutching their wooden spades and little red buckets tight in their thin little hands—she took such clothes as she wanted to have with her to Ella's kitchen, where they were packed in Ella's bag, and together they took train for the village in the Wirral. Ella was more than ever magnificent, having bought herself a frock which she imagined to be suitable for the country. It was a very remote and very poor cousin of a frock designed for a fine lady to wear at Ascot perhaps eight years before. To Lucy it was dazzling, though she could not help smiling as she pictured Ella strutting through the muck of the farmyard in such splendid array. They were both happy, and Ella pumped Lucy as to the position, wealth, physical appearance, virtues and vices of Mr. Richard Tenton. Lucy had been fond of Dick in old days, and was nothing loath to talk of him.

He was waiting for them at the station with a farm-cart—a fine fellow, broad in the shoulder, long and strong in the leg, with a great head on him, a shock of touzled light brown hair, the ends of which were bleached by the sun, and a complexion

brick-red, so that his little eyes were vividly blue. They beamed and twinkled, danced as they saw Lucy, and became suddenly solemn as they lighted on Ella. His heavy face became sombre and sheepish, and he hitched his right shoulder nervously. Lucy introduced them.

"This is Dick—my friend, Miss Jennings. I been tellin' 'er 'bout you, Dick."

"Haw. Not much to talk about, I'm not."

"Lucy's so fond of you, Mr. Tenton," said Ella, with an entirely detestable ogling glance of the eyes and little flutter of the painted eyelids. Dick was abashed, and went away in search of the bag, which they described to him. He returned with it on his shoulder.

Lucy and the bag were at the back of the cart. Ella sat by Dick on his raised seat of the driver, and during the three miles flattered him, ogled him, cooed and twittered at him, so that he arrived completely bewildered at the farm. Lucy's condition was not very different. She had heard everything, each subtle inflection in Ella's voice, and though she had never admitted to herself a fondness for Dick, she arrived at the farm with a curious sensation of fear.

As they turned out of the road into the lane leading up to the farm, Dick whistled, and in a few moments a large sheep-dog hurled himself through the hedge and raced along by the side of the cart, leaping into the air and barking. Lucy called to him. He redoubled his exertions, jumped higher and higher, and began to perform little tricks, looking round to make sure that she was observing him. Presently he was off like an arrow and disappeared again. When they drove into the yard he sprang out from behind the barn and stood with his tongue out, crouching back and panting until Lucy descended, when he leaped upon her, laid his fore-paws on her shoulders and made to lick her face. She kissed his nose and pushed him away. He snuffed at Ella's skirt, and with a twitch of his nose ran away and lapped at his drinking-trough.

Dick carried the bag into the house and called to Lucy's mother, who appeared from the house with her skirt pinned up round her hips and her thick arms covered with moist flour from the pastry-bowl—a large rough woman with scant hair oiled and parted in the middle, broad shoulders and thick neck. She walked like a man ; she had a pronounced moustache, iron-grey, and a few strong hairs growing on her chin. Her eyes were grim, but there was softness and some kindness in her mouth, firm and set as it was. She kissed Lucy quite warmly,

surveyed Ella with an appraising eye, apologised for not shaking hands with her, and invited her to step in.

Ella stepped in. Mrs. Evans returned to her pastry, while Lucy nervously showed Ella the household gods : the salmon that her father had caught in the Dee, the owl that she had caught in the woods with a lame wing and had for a pet for a whole year until it died because she had forgotten to feed it, the daguerreotypes of her grandfather and grandmother, the photographed group at the wedding of her father and mother, the coloured and enlarged photograph of herself as a baby, her brother in Australia and his wife, her father's gun, the brass candlesticks and the warming-pan, the American organ and the awards given to her father's Jersey cows, explaining how her father swore by Jerseys when all the other farmers went in for shorthorns, because they could sell them for meat when they had to be killed. Ella displayed a languid interest, and turned the conversation on to Dick Tenton, and from Dick in particular to the other young men of the village in general. From the kitchen, Mrs. Evans screamed for Lucy—and she fled, leaving Ella to amuse herself as best she could. Ella looked quizzically round the room and through the French window into the garden, where was a brave show of asters. She thought of going into the garden, but just then it began to rain. She turned to a photograph dark enough to serve as a mirror and began to arrange her hat, twisting and pulling at her kiss-curls. She heard a masculine step on the threshold of the window, and thinking it was Dick, remained with her back turned, to pique him to interest in herself.

She peered into the glass to see what effect she might be producing, but the image of the man was not sufficiently clear. He made no movement and she began to feel a little embarrassed, and to wonder what she should most effectively do. To make time, she continued the study of her features as though she had heard nothing. She heard the man snigger, and waited for him to break into a laugh. He continued to snigger and snigger with a curious snuffling intake through his nose that irritated her. Still she made no sign that she was aware, and the sniggering went on. The man lit a cigarette and she heard him sit down in the far corner, still sniggering with that maddening snuffle. Her gorge rose, she turned swiftly and with hardly a glance at the man she said :

" Don't snuffle."

He burst into a laugh, a laugh like the rustling of dry leaves, with his mouth wide open so that she saw nearly all his teeth,

some yellow, some crowned with gold. The gold gleamed, the mouth shut with a snap, and the lips stretched in a thin unpleasant grin, and his nose seemed to come down over his moustache. He sniggered again, and his little dark oily eyes twinkled as he deliberately made the snuffling intake through his nose, twice. The little oily eyes looked up at Ella, but without any particular interest, as though they had already seen all that they wished to see in her face. Ella looked at the man, and saw that he was well though flashily dressed. He had the appearance of an opulent organ-grinder—quantities of dark greasy hair, thin at the temples and streaked with grey, growing low on his forehead; his eyebrows were thick, the eyes rather prominent and heavily marked, puckered, and the eyelids swollen and red-veined: he was of shiny olive complexion against which the redness of the lips was marked; he had a little round chin. A small man, broad and high-shouldered, he did not please Ella, but she repented of her little burst of irritation when she noticed the costly rings on his hands, the pin in his full bow-tie, and the double watch-chain of fine gold-work. Ella had a practised eye for such things. She smiled pleasantly at the man as she sat down with the remark:

"You startled me. I thought it was Dick."

The man blew several smoke-rings but made no reply. The little eyes twinkled. Ella tried again:

"Lucy didn't tell me you were here. I mean that any one else was staying in the—the 'ouse."

She dropped that "h" with a bang, bit her lip and was suddenly interested in her shoe. He replied:

"'Oo is Lucia?"

"You're French then?"

"Italian."

"Lucy's the daughter of the—the house." (No doubt about the "h" this time, like the hissing of a goose.) "I'm her friend and we've come down to the country for a week. My name's Ella—Ella Jennings—what's yours?"

"Giuseppe—Joseph Conti—and Lucia, is she also—pretty—be-yootiful?"

There was a soft lisp in his voice, a subtle caress, which, through the man's vain preenings, became almost indecent and would have offended a woman with the defensive instinct less blunted and coarsened than Ella—Lucy for instance. In truth, Ella rather liked it; it excited her—gave her something of the sensation that she had in public drinking-places. She tossed her head.

"Oh! Lucy. She's ever so much prettier than I am. Are you here for long?"

"Three days more—I 'ave—a—been 'ere a week—and bored, 'ow I 'ave been bored. I 'ave made nothing, but smoked cigarettes—Meesterra Evans, 'e talk of nothing but 'is cows—of cows I know nothing and of music 'e know nothing. I am musician. I 'ave been ill and for rest I am come 'ere. Cigarettes and cows—nothing else. You are here now—and Lucia: well, we shall not be bored—*hein?*"

"I'm all right. Lucy's pretty, but she's not much fun——"

"Lucia. Does she also talk of cows?"

"Oh, no. She loves music. So do I. What do you play?"

"'Ere there is nothing but this." He kicked his foot out contemptuously in the direction of the American organ and spat out through the window. He looked at Ella for a second. He was relieved to find that she did not mind his spitting. Having placed her thus, he set himself to be charming to her, and amused himself with stuffing her with preposterous compliments and thick flattery. It tickled him to see how much Ella would swallow. She seemed to his quick mind incredibly slow and stupid, and after half an hour he began to be bored with the game. He had almost exhausted its possibilities when Lucy returned. She had donned a print dress and a mobcap, pink. She looked very pretty. Over one arm she held a tablecloth with a red border, and in her hands a tray of knives and forks, cruet and glasses. She opened her mouth to speak to Ella, perceived the Italian, and gave a little gasp of surprised shyness. She stepped back a pace, lowered her eyes and bowed to him with a demure compression of the lips that failed as a smile but was quite charming as a greeting.

Mr. Giuseppe Conti rose to his feet and bowed hand on heart, after throwing away his cigarette.

"Miss Lucia," he said.

"How do you do?" said Lucy. "Mother's been telling me about you. I hope you're better."

"Oh! Yes—I am prime ox beef now—so much milk."

"The Jerseys give better milk than shorthorns."

Mr. Conti cast a quizzical comic look of despair at Ella. Cows! It escaped Ella, who was interested in Lucy. She looked so different and so pretty in those odd clothes. Quite a different Lucy from the little general servant. There was a note of authority in her expression. Mr. Conti had bowed to

it : Ella was puzzled, a little alarmed and more than a little annoyed by it without knowing what it was. She did recognise, however, that Lucy, moving about and working, held the advantage of herself sitting still in her hat and outdoor garments. She suggested to Lucy that she should help. Lucy apologised for neglecting her, said that her mother would find something for her to do in the kitchen, and took her upstairs to show her her room. Mr. Conti had the best spare room that looked south and contained the big four-post bed and the dearest of the family treasures, so Ella had to share with Lucy a large attic that ran the whole length of one wing of the house.

A mobcap and a large apron were produced for Ella, and Lucy left her to don an aspect as nearly bucolic as possible. When she returned to the living-room (except when there were visitors in the house the family never lived in it, but in the kitchen) Lucy found Mr. Conti sitting in an attitude of the blackest dejection. She smiled brightly at him and went on with her work, passing to and from the kitchen. After some delay through a little altercation with her mother, Lucy returned to find Mr. Conti pacing up and down in a frenzy. He turned to her suddenly, pounced at her with the words :

" Why is—is she yo' frien' ? "

Lucy stared at him, so strange did the question seem to her.

" I said, Why—why—why—is she yo' frien' ? "

" She's—she's in service near me—we go out together—she's a town girl. It was dull without her."

" You so fresh and pretty, and she——"

Lucy blushed and said " Mr. Conti ! " in mild protest. She went on cutting bread and butter as though she had no immediate concern with the Italian, who collapsed as completely as Alf and all the other young men had done. He saw now what Ella had meant when she said that Lucy was not much fun. He began to chew his moustache and to laugh at the end of his teeth, as the French say the English do. He tried various topics of conversation, but found them all break down against Lucy's happy composure. He was nonplussed and keenly interested. His sense of humour embraced the situation, flickered round it. All the same he was relieved when Mrs. Evans was heard shouting across the yard to her husband and Dick Tenton that dinner was ready.

They all sat down to dinner—boiled beef, suet-dumpling, and damson-pudding, fare odious to the Italian—the Evans family, Dick, Mr. Conti; and, after grace said, sat waiting for Ella to fill the empty chair next to Dick. She appeared in a blue

print dress and mobcap, grotesque, absurd as Marie Antoinette and her ladies must have looked when they practised the simple life at Versailles : not that Ella bore any resemblance to the unhappy queen, but that did not occur to the mind of Mr. Conti, who alone of the party had ever heard of the doings at the Court of Louis XVI.

Ella was greeted warmly by Mr. Evans, a great bear of a man, who threw out a huge hairy hand and dragged her into her chair. Lucy flitted about ministering to their wants, beer for the men, nettle-beer for the women. Mr. Conti sat flattering Mrs. Evans, cajoling her into an easy temper.

(*To be continued*)

The Wife of Altamont

By Violet Hunt

I

In Hinderland, one cold October day, an important ceremony was toward—nothing less than the solemn christening of a world baby—the work of many fierce and expert hands—the child of capital and labour. This iron infant had been framed to live, breathe, and have its being in the water: the chrism with which it should be launched sacramentally into its element must needs be wine. To-day at twelve o'clock, the patient waters of the Arrow would cleave and part to receive a solid body that would astonish them and displace them to the extent of more than nine thousand tons.

In the yard of Messrs. Veere, Avercamp and Veere, the world-famous shipbuilders of the North, the immense creature lay still, inert, on the brink of life. At a given signal, the deft engineer who was responsible for her would release her in the modern way, by the removal of one little wonderful bolt, the knot of the whole complicated system of ligatures which interdepended on its proud insignificancy. That gone, there was nothing to stay the eager nurseling. With a subtle, far-reaching tremor she would move, inappreciably at first, soon so that all men should see and admire the delicacy of her engineer's handling and his dexterity in determining her course. She would settle into her stride, and slip down, with the majestic deliberation of all truly great things, suavely and without effort, as a duck broadens its breast to a slat, and swings out into the mill-pond. She would slowly and surely cleave the stream with her keel, and, self-arresting, predestinated, lie down happily on the sullen surface of the waters. They would close round her, they would lap her evermore, lovingly, faithfully, inseparably, till what time the red rust should overcome her, her corroded plates thin and splinter, and her weakened bolts fall out and leave her disarrayed and undone. Then, willy-nilly, her splendid life would end, she would sink to the bottom of the sea, or be shamefully scrapped in some derelict dockyard.

Men had made her, men would use her to their ends, men would die in, with—and through her. She was born, launched on her career, a thing to count with, a fierce, fully armed, monster baby stored with deadly exuberant vitality.

In the breasts of the thousands of eager persons who stood that day on the rough wooden staging of the yard of Messrs. Veere, Avercamp and Veere, anchored by expectant curiosity to the sticky planks turgid with mud, for it had rained, was raining and would rain—thoughts such as these, conscious and unconscious, harboured. Collected from the surrounding parts—for country it could not be called where roads ran black bordered by haggard ghosts of trees—by the absorbing interest of a launch, most of these people had never seen such a thing before, and would probably never care to come so far to give themselves that particular thrill again.

It was new to a young girl, noticeable in the seedy, tweed-clad north-country crowd, by reason of the brilliant hair and colouring which Nature had given her, and the determined shade of the dress she had chosen to set off her beauty. It was of a "whole" colour, no humble slavish mixture for Miss Elizabeth New! Like a bold blue kingfisher, she flashed out in a crowd of tame brown sparrows, and scorned to hold an umbrella over herself. Other women might fly to that awkward protection to shield the inconsistent borrowed plumage that decked them, and, as they would have said, put "a bit of colour" about them. Elizabeth New rejoiced in the fact that she was self-trimmed: rain might wet but could not dim the living glory of her hair.

She was the only daughter of the rather exceptional Vicar of Arske, by his cook. He had married the woman all right, he was that kind of man, but the living of Arske was a poor one and George New, in marrying, was aware that now he would never get a better. No preferment would ever come his way, though Mrs. New, as cooks go, was rather superior and very pretty, albeit of a fluffy, soulless prettiness that soon fades. The gentle vicar did not go about to add to the disadvantages of the position he had made for himself by sulking with life, or bemoaning the consequences of his indulgence of a supreme fit of self-will. He had made his bed, and he lay on it quietly and did not toss. He did, sometimes, contrive to hint to his young daughter that the habit of taking the bit between one's teeth matrimonially was apt to run in families and that she must lie in wait with herself to correct a tendency to marry suicidally. The girl was inclined to be light like her mother, capricious, like her father. The scholar and gentleman knew he could have educated and trained his daughter

himself : he chose quietly to forego that privilege, for her greater good. He early deprived Mrs. New of her child's society and help, by sending her away, as soon as it was possible, to a much better school than he could afford and keeping her there as long as he could, and while he could not. He was in favour of her accepting visits in between her terms if possible. Young Elizabeth, being of a gregarious disposition, and possessing long golden hair, that strong power of attraction in school-girls for other school-girls, was snapped up for every week of her holidays by adoring fellow-students, with amusing luxurious homes.

She never perhaps realised, so softly did he perform the sacrifice, the self-effacement, the tactful resignation of the male parent, patiently enduring, up there in his lonely north-country parish, the deprivation of what might have been the light of his days, and taking on himself the whole weight of the society of the underbred woman he had chosen to make the mother of his child. They always seemed the same, the girl thought, "sweet stick-in-the-muds," "dear good pottering people," when she returned to do up her wardrobe—in which art her mother showed a facility amounting to genius—to lie by for a little, to tell her father about the different people, the various strata of society she had seen and studied, to show her mother what was worn and how to wear it.

She was quite sure that she had a happy home ; she did not really test it, she was in it so seldom—after she left school hardly at all. The father's academic, rather pedantic precision and calm envisagement of unalterable fact, the mother's sweet silliness and unaggressive commonness, produced and maintained at an even level the atmosphere of cheap comfort and devitalised amenity that she always came back to with a conscious restful pleasure.

Her latest flight had been as far as London, where she had roomed for a couple of months with another girl, a worker and a Suffragette. That was fine ! She liked raids, and street speaking, and banner-carrying. She learned a certain trick of easy frankness, a confraternity of outlook, in her intercourse with women. With men she flirted distantly, Artemis-like, combining with coarseness of fibre incurred on her mother's side her father's delicacy and fastidiousness.

Some one, a tradesman, had given her a white ticket for the launch. She had come into Hinderland by train early to do some shopping. She got through it, quickly, and arrived in good time at the yard. Now, with two large packages of drapery purchases in her hand, she waited patiently in the rain for the

culminating moment of the show, peering about curiously, craning up her neck, at the risk of letting her rather seedy hat fall off, and loosening the one or two pins that cleverly restrained, without impeding, the artful flow backwards of her masses of reddish-gold hair. It was a trick, arrived at through many a frenzied moment of sustained effort in the silence of her chamber. The rites of dress might and did absorb much of her time. She was apt to think of many totally irrelevant things in terms of toilette. Staring at the shape of the thin, gracile creature that towered above her, its polished sides scooped out to the last degree of refinement, she was irresistibly borne towards a sartorial comparison. The delicate bevel of the iron plates that formed the keel reminded her of the subtle *échancrure* of a pair of women's stays.

From the point where she stood the vanishing curves suggested, not so much a deep-bellied vessel constructed to absorb and carry whole armaments, but a mere sharp weapon of offence, a projectile waiting to be fired off. The gold lettering, foreshortened, of the name on the stern she could not have distinguished unless she had known it. The vessel was built by Messrs. Veere, Avercamp and Veere for the Cimmerian Government and it was named the *Elisabetta*. The bottle of champagne, decked with ribands of the national colour, hung dangling from the stern in apt juxtaposition to the platform, covered with red baize, which had been erected for the gorgeously attired lady and her friends, who stood there ready to break the bottle against the ship as soon as the signal should have been given. She was the wife of the Cimmerian Ambassador and the stout man at her side was, so Elizabeth was given to understand, the Admiral of the Cimmerian Fleet.

Elizabeth watched all these people eagerly, and did not scruple to ask any questions that she wanted to know of the bystanders. She was not shy. But there was one active personage, whose name she wished to ascertain, but could not. He was slight, serious and pale, and she liked his looks, though his eyes were too small. They rested on her, once, attracted by the colour of her hair. She was used to that passing form of tribute.

A hush fell upon the chattering bustling crowd. It was the hour!

"She's moving—she's moving now!" said a man near to Elizabeth. "Not that you'll notice it till the lady gives the tap—and hardly even then!"

"Success to the *Elisabetta!*"

The formal words were inaudible, except to the fair speaker's

immediate neighbours, but the little clash of the broken bottle warned all that they were being said. Furthermore, there was the ridiculously inadequate libation of froth that showed on the shining black surface. Elizabeth, as the man beside her had advised her to do, had counted the bolt-heads discernible on the hither side of one of the supports of the platform—there had been five—now there were only four and the squat, round blob of iron appeared beyond the limit. . . . No quicker than that ! . . .

Yet she moved. A tense shout ! She moved indeed !

She moved, she raced, she tore down the even slope. It was almost terrible ! But Elizabeth was glad she had come. She felt now as if her very heart was being pulled out of her body, as if her whole being were stirred, torn, nay, dragged down to the shore of the Arrow along with the leaping, healthy, newly freed monster. A sense of disintegration was hers, of emptiness, giddiness, induced by the sight of the useless slats that were left jumping behind in its track, and the painful elimination from her view of the upstanding stern to which she had grown accustomed. The silly little red platform looked sad and foolish . . . left behind. . . .

The showy, golden-haired girl burst into tears !

Others wept too, doubtless, but Elizabeth felt herself alone in her disgrace. Nobody noticed her except the pale, slim, serious young man, who was marshalling some smart people down the improvised steps of the platform, and warning them to be careful.

"Down this way, Lady Sternways, for the luncheon, and the speeches ! . . . Take care. We have a covered way underground. It's drier. . . ."

He and his stout convoy passed Elizabeth, who was still helplessly dabbing her eyes with her pocket-handkerchief. He spoke to her, threading his words, as it were, on the general string of directions to Lady Sternways.

"Down here, yes. Then under cover. . . . Is it your first launch ? A moving sight, isn't it ? "

"Yes," Elizabeth murmured.

"I've seen dozens, of course. But still. . . . Come and listen to the speeches ? "

"But they're mixed up with the lunch ? . . ."

"Yes. Come and lunch too ? "

"Can I ? "

"If I ask you ? I'm Mr. Veere. . . . Yes, down there. Follow me, next time I come along with a dowager. . . . Then you can drink the health of the *Elisabetta* in champagne ! "

She refrained from informing him that the *Elisabetta* was more or less her namesake, and as he had instructed her to do, followed him and a large and important-looking lady the next time he descended the steps. The road passed down by an easy gradient, and they fared along underground for a time in a passage lit by dim lamps. The young man looked back now and then, and encouraged her by a busy, preoccupied smile. Then they ascended again and proceeded, in their hundreds, up some steps, and into a large sky-lighted place, where tables were laid transversely. One table, slightly raised, bisected them—the High Table of high report.

Her friend escorted his charge to a place somewhere near the middle of it, and Elizabeth waited again, standing by the corner of one of the cross-tables and following him with intelligent, obedient eyes.

"Now," said he, coming back quickly, "I want you to hear. I'm going to speak. Up here, see? Slip in, close to the bigwigs."

Seated at this abutting corner of the High Table where he had so kindly placed her, she noticed that there were only men. Stealing a look at the cards that lay in front of their places she read such labels as these: "Representative of the *Sweep*," "Representative of the *Hinderland Leader*," and realised that she was among the reporters. That did not frighten her. She was a Suffragette, and had attended and even stewarded many meetings.

These gentlemen fed heartily and allowed their champagne glasses to be filled to the brim, but they did not drink. Elizabeth drank hers readily, and understood how the inspiriting beverage may prepare and inure the intelligence to long speeches heard by those whose business it is not to report them. While eating her sandwiches, she asked the young man who happened to be seated next to her, the name of her benefactor.

"Veere. Mr. Ernest Rose Veere. Son of one partner. Nephew of Sir Joris Veere, the man at the head of the table."

Something in the tone in which he said this impelled Elizabeth to look more closely at her neighbour. Into the mere three-letter word *man* he had contrived to throw a venom such as should hardly proceed from the mere good-humoured reporter. First at his card, which bore the name of a newspaper that was familiar to her—the *Sweep*.

She thought that he must be a foreigner. He had blue-black hair, crested a little on his forehead, and a pert but scanty moustache. His lips were red and vivid, his eyes dull and

spiritless. His hands were white and his nails fine, and beautifully, but not over, polished. Slight and thin, there was something about his figure which reminded her of that of her kind chance introducer here, and now she came to think of it, in the face too, especially about the forehead. . . .

Absurd, a reporter, and Mr. Ernest Rose Veere!

The toast-master gave out the healths of the distinguished Cimmerians present, followed by those of the Veeres and Avercamps. There was no Lady Veere, apparently? Had there ever been one? Or was she dead?

The healths were drunk. It was the turn of the speeches. "Now to work!" observed the reporters, smiling, and pencils flew to paper. She listened attentively to the speeches, though they were of the usual "Pleasure of meeting you all here today!" and "What I should like to say" variety. The speech made by Sir Joris, however, had a quality of its own. It was poignant, personal, and to the point. The fine, bluff, bearded old man spoke it fluently, in a voice that showed signs of age.

"He never wrote that himself," said her neighbour. "That's some of Master Ernest's bluff, I can tell you."

He reported it, nevertheless.

Then young Veere spoke. A good speech, too, ancillary to his uncle's.

"Rather too close to the old man's," again observed the young reporter at her side. Under the influence of Elizabeth's eyes he seemed to have become less taciturn. "But he's a clever, go-ahead chap. What I can't stand is his d—d insufferable manner! Been too much in America."

"Has he?" said the young girl, faintly interested. The field of her observation, which young Veere had bid fair to monopolise, as her protector and introducer to the feast, was now being encroached on by her more flashy, impressive neighbour.

"Oh yes, they were determined to get him out of the rut—work up the family, see? They're awful swells now, but of course you know that the first Veere, this man's grandfather, was a marine storekeeper, here in a back street of Hinderland, and rose."

"That's always a sign of cleverness."

"Certainly. Far be it from me to blacken the family. All I meant to say was that they are quite self-made people, originally Dutch, with the vices of parvenus. That is to say, they go one better in dissipation than the people who've been rich all along and got used to it!"

"They go bust, in fact!" said Elizabeth smiling. "You

are talking like an article in the *Sweep*. We take in the *Sweep* at home, mother and I. Father says it's hog-wash."

"People like hog-wash. And people like me must live by providing it. Well, as I was saying, Sir Joris up there has been every sort of man. You wouldn't think to look at him as he sits at the High Table so dignified, so august, so smug——"

"What dreadful things are you hinting at?" said the young girl comfortably. "Do you know you strike me as having a very bad mind—and tongue! I suppose you mean he's lived, that's all."

Her pinkness and innocence seemed to undo the cynicism of her words. It was as though a spring lamb should be caught performing an elaborate piece of step-dancing, playing with its artless fellows along the hawthorn hedges. "Is there a Lady Veere?"

"No, he never was married."

"You've put an accent on the married," said she recklessly. "What is known as a gay bachelor, eh? Well, you seem to know them all very well—for a reporter just down for the day from London, I mean."

The reporter bent his tragic eyes upon her, and saw that she was fair. An immense need of sympathy, a desire to confide in this soft, skittish young thing, overcame him. He confided in her.

"Would you like me to tell you how it is that I am so up in the family?"

"Yes," she replied impulsively, and sealed her fate.

"Because Sir Joris Veere is my father."

He told her all about it in the little tea-place where she allowed him to take her afterwards. The daughter of the cook and the savant, impersonally curious on all subjects, democratically careless of personal dignity, felt no hesitation in setting up an intimacy with this handsome portentous young man with a history he was burning to repeat. She listened with a lax *camaraderie;* she was interested, he had the journalistic touch and could put things dramatically. Squalid details he spared her, he already cared not to alienate her nascent liking for him. Her happy, cordial nature seemed to him the fit complement to his dour retiring one. His *sæva indignatio* lay deep, his woes burnt in on his heart for ever; with her, it was easy to see, anything in the nature of a grievance would not "lie"—no more than snow in spring. To the hard-worked waitress, whom, as Elizabeth noticed, he tipped handsomely, they seemed

a handsome heaven-destined pair. Standing idle at her high desk, that bored functionary heard him, as he helped the young lady on with her coat, which she had doffed on coming in and draped over the back of her chair, so as to show her fresh home-washed blouse and round uncovered arms, say, with an air of finality :

"I should like you to know my mother, Miss Altamont." The woman at the desk thought that odd—so did Elizabeth.

"Miss Altamont ?" the girl asked interrogatively, as they walked together out into the street.

"My mother was an actress. It's the name she was known by on the stage. And it happens to be mine."

II

Elizabeth Altamont rose late of a morning. A constitution like hers needed a great deal of sleep—but she did not allow this comparative sluggishness of habit to interfere with the performance of her housewifely functions, wherein, without precisely excelling, she was equal to the average. Her duties were strictly laid down for her by herself ; she knew to a penny how much money she had got to keep house on. Her husband contributed nothing to the expenses, although he had some ill-defined occupation connected with finance which furnished him with pocket-money. He had long since given up or been relieved of that post on the *Sweep* which had been the cause of their meeting at the launch of the *Elisabetta* at Hinderland, and subsequent hasty engagement and marriage. Though Wilfrid Altamont's personal income was thus solidly diminished, he knew that he could still rely on his board and a lodging under his stern mother's roof when he chose to claim it, and that no questions would be asked of him when he did so choose. His absences were frequent, amounting to half his time. His letters were not forwarded, it mattered to no one where he had been. Even if his periodical excursions were, as he said, connected with business, the proceeds of his financial negotiations did not find their way to the family coffers. If, as was then presumed by the household, things had worked out badly, he sometimes allowed himself on his return to fall into the vulgar error of knocking his wife about.

Seven years of union with the man of her choice had turned the careless easy girl of Hinderland into a bitter introspective woman. She was good stuff ; her temper was not spoiled, she merely proceeded to hate Wilfrid Altamont, her one fatal and permanent mistake, with a quiet intensive hatred that was happily

powerless to affect or alter a line or a curve of her beautiful face. This meant that she did not brood, or nurse her wrongs; she "said things!" Her husband by now knew full well that his wife realised his vanity, his meanness, his perversity and morbidity. Though she loudly proclaimed that she expected no good of him, she as loudly scouted the idea of any splendid sin on his part, any desperate and picturesque criminality. So far she was right. Dreary year after dreary year passed, and Wilfrid showed only as a wastrel of sorts, living on his mother and neglecting his placable wife. A single scar, aptly placed on her forehead in a region where she could hide it with her magnificent hair, stood for the solitary symptom of ill-treatment. He had given her no child, which in the interests of humanity she could not regret, though as an individual she longed for one.

The promise held out to her in the little Hinderland restaurant of a meeting with Wilfrid's mother had been a powerful factor in her acceptance of the son. She had fallen in love with that lady at first sight, impressed by the first cynical words pronounced by the ex-dancer and glory of the stage, by that time sunk to be a stout dignified invalid of sixty, unable to walk without a stick, and hardly then. What the young girl had so liked about Miss Altamont, the item of her pose which had struck her bold young imagination, was this—that with regard to the vital fact of her life, Miss Altamont neither admitted nor reserved. The maiden prefix—her grown-up son who lived with her and was proud of her—there was no need to say more! Elizabeth considered it so splendid and sensible that she should have chosen to adopt this permanent antithesis as her social signboard, her wordless explanation—if any were sought—of Worksop House and three hundred a year paid her by Sir Joris Veere in quarterly instalments. No one entered her house—the house paid for by the father of her son—on false pretences. That under these conditions, people, and people of some standing, did cross her threshold, was her blue ribbon, proudly warm. Whatever her history might prove of weakness, of cupidity, she had heaps of character, not all of it bad. Even her own pettifogging little world of Wimbledon conceded as much. Elizabeth thought her all good, and after a fortnight's delay and five teas with Miss Altamont, married the son on his mother's merits, and his own face. He was abominably good-looking.

She was now nearly thirty. For the last five years she had been Miss Altamont's nurse. The old woman had grown so stout and had suffered such severe health complications that she was unable to leave her room. Her daughter-in-law nurse-

tended her. She had schooled herself in this connection to be thoughtful, business-like, long-suffering; had modified herself all for love, being naturally of a careless, an easy-going, and high-spirited disposition. She liked to sit up and potter about half the night, but she now went to bed early, because it was quite on the cards, given the state of Miss Altamont's health, that her nurse might have to watch all night. She disliked very much hanging over the fire, it ruined her complexion, but she cooked all Miss Altamont's meals herself, and did not allow Georgiana Jack, the untidy "general" whose services were all their income allowed them, to enter the sick-room at all. She herself did not care what she ate, her splendid health was proof even against Georgiana's dough. Wilfrid, so she conceived, had no claims on her housewifely capabilities, he must, and did, settle things with Georgiana, when he cared to be at home. That grew to be more seldom as time went on, and his indifferent yet resentful wife did not seek to keep him by her side by means of cunningly devised dishes. The time was past for all that.

Worksop House, of which Julia Altamont, spinster, was the long leaseholder, had been, thirty years ago, a fine red-brick house, standing in its own grounds. The garden had now been built over, and the old Georgian relic stood faded, unnoticeable, crowded out, as number fifty-eight, High Street, Perton. But when the tall unpretending door—that was perched up two big steps like horse-blocks—was opened, the educated visitor had a vision of pure eighteenth century, in the knobby carved staircase, the old panelling of the walls, the low-pitched ceiling, though the fan over the outer door, the swags over the inner, were all chipped now, and the paint of the walls blistered and crumbling into decay. And should the tall, stout figure of Miss Altamont herself chance to cross the hall as in earlier days, wearing her black dress, covered by her silk apron, with the quiet keys that did not jingle, so softly did they lie moored at her waist, the illusion would have been complete.

There was not one square yard of flooring that was horizontal in Worksop House, not an upright that was perpendicular; low drooping ceilings and crooked skirting-boards, wherein mice scuttled and went about their affairs day and night, made up an antique, uncomfortable, unhygienic *ensemble* that neither Wilfrid Altamont nor his wife appreciated, for rather various reasons.

Mrs. Altamont's professed Philistinism was merely superficial and connected with her intense underlying bitterness. Every one in Wimbledon knew that Worksop House, however charmingly

rococo and old-world, was the wages of commonplace sin, and though Elizabeth Altamont brazened it out, she felt her position deeply. With her, the innocent word " Georgian " had come to mean " suburban," and " suburban," she averred, was to be the word that, when she came to die, would be written on her heart. The prejudice coloured her whole speech, and her very life. The hateful suburbs used the little word " art " as an adjective ; Elizabeth declined to use it at all. She loudly discounted and flouted all forms of culture developed by the denizens of the detested *milieu* she was rooted in, held there by her cult and sincere affection for an old, unregenerate, dying woman.

Miss Julia Altamont's bedroom—the best—was the furthermost one of a chain of three opening one out of the other, and occupying the whole of the first story. Mrs. Altamont slept in the outermost section, the intermediate one being reserved as a sort of anteroom. The uneven floor of it was a drunkard's dream ; it had no carpet.

At half-past eight one autumn morning, the maid called Mrs. Altamont as usual (she possessed no watch) and planted two jugs full of water, one hot and one cold, on the bare floor of the anteroom and brought to her mistress's bedside the early cup of tea on which the young woman broke her fast, literally, eating nothing till the middle of the day. She did much work on that cup of tea.

Georgie's rap was not a sound to ignore. Briskly, Mrs. Altamont rose, and took her bath in the anteroom without disturbing Miss Altamont, without even inquiring into the invalid's condition after the long night. It was better so. But sometimes, sponge in hand, the water rustling off her polished body, she would suspend operations and stare nervously at that closed door, which some morning, any morning, might mask a death-bed ! Early dead—or sleeping late—the dear, dear old thing ! Sometimes, overcome by her imagination, the young woman found herself tingling all over with fear. Yet methodically, she proceeded with the work of ablution ; she would not break through her rule of leaving the subject of her fears severely alone until, an hour later, she entered the room with her breakfast.

Throwing on a blue *peignoir*, carefully chosen to suit her complexion, she brushed up her beautiful hair into a hasty but not unbecoming knot, without, however, attempting to dress it in the elaborate fashion that would exhibit all its splendour later on, and left her room.

She minced down the broad staircase with its rickety steps,

of so slight a gradient that each one was a separate shock of unexpected triviality. She touched the banister once as she went down, for form's sake, and took into account a distinct smudge on her delicate hand. A look of disgust, succeeded by an adumbration of the scolding that was Georgie's due, crossed her face. Then a slight shrug in the direction of a glass door underneath the stairs that led to Georgie's quarters spoke of her kind manumission of the forfeit. One girl couldn't do everything in a rambling old house like this, where there were so many surfaces and so few conveniences.

At the bottom of the flight, Ginger, the yellow house-cat, came forth from some catly fastness or other, and threaded itself in and out of the banisters in her honour. She stroked it lazily with her foot and it left her forthwith and went and sat down expectantly at the door of her husband's study.

Wilfrid slept, when he was at home, in a sort of airy closet opening out of a room on the ground floor that he was pleased to call his study. It was scantily, carelessly furnished, a chair or two, a couple of cupboards in the panelling, and a big unwieldy *secrétaire* he had purchased for himself. There he would often sit for the whole day and brood—or drink. One of the cupboards held the wherewithal to do so. His reveries were respected by all, including Georgiana, who likewise respected the thick dust that collected there, according to his orders. She did not attempt to raise it or his temper, of which she was reasonably afraid. In hot and cold blood he called her by the derogatory appellation "Slavey," rousing a strong spirit of opposition in his wife, which led her to be an angelic mistress, almost a friend to "Georgie."

Wilfrid was not averse from the cat; and indeed it was the only creature in the house that showed any predilection for his society. But he had been away from home for three days, and it was odd that the cat, who knew everything, did not know that?

Mrs. Altamont opened the door of the study and looked in.

Wilfrid was there! She mechanically fastened the neck of her *peignoir*, as she would have done for the butcher's man or the plumber. . . .

He was sitting, his head a little bowed, at the odious cheap writing-table with the five long drawers that could never be got in again after one had been venturesome enough to open them, and a sliding top that would not slide. She spoke, still keeping her hand on the knob of the door.

"When did you come back?"

"Last night. I didn't disturb you."

"Why should you? And——" She stopped, but the intention of her tone nettled him.

"Mind your own business. Has the doctor been since I left?"

"Yes."

"How does he say my mother is?"

"He says she may last several months, or pop off—those were his words—any minute. I don't know how that falls in with your views? But I mean to keep her here as long as I can. She wants care—more care—and always care. I'll give it. I am fond of your mother."

"I know, and she's fond of you, damn you! You've got a common bond."

"What?" she asked idly.

"Disapproval of me. I know that you two amuse yourselves abusing me all day! You haven't a good word for me, either of you! I'm all that's beastly, according to my wife and my mother. Yet—" He flicked a quill pen against his thumb, broke it, and threw it away. She followed it with her eyes into the waste-paper basket. "It's odd, when you come to think of it! She bore me and you married me!"

"Both in error!" she replied quickly. "But you were fairly plausible in those days—quite good-looking. You are not bad-looking, now, Wilfrid, if you didn't drink so."

A slightly caressing, pleading intonation subtly, and as it were against her will, crept into her voice. It had no effect on him.

"Drink! Yes—why not? Oh, I own to all the vices implanted in me by my gentleman-like forebears."

"Don't, Wilfrid, you sicken me."

"Born in shame—so you said," he went on. "Married to a woman with a tongue like a whip-lash. My wretched home where I live on sufferance, my restrictions abroad through want of money, the sight of this filthy, old, ill-adjusted world turning so coolly on its beastly misplaced axis——!"

"Why do you waste all this on me? Make an article of it."

"I couldn't write a line in the state I'm in now. You've worked me up—as usual, damn you! My head's like a lump of lead—and my chest aches!"

She knew he was phthisical. She said, more quietly, "You always think worse of the world after you come back from a week's outing, don't you?"

"Some insinuation there?" he remarked, with affected carelessness. This was one of the moments in his intercourse with

her that he courted and yet dreaded. He always hoped that in a reckless mood she might throw off some of the reserve that was a *parti pris* with her and his mother, and reveal the extent of her acquaintance with his affairs. This time he was not disappointed. She rose to the gibe. She was tired, and nervous.

"Of course there is! Do you think I don't know where you go?"

"Where do I go, you fool?"

"To Camberwell, to see that other fool you keep there."

"She's no fool. She loves me, and she knows I love her. She's all right."

"Oh, I've no doubt your mistress has a better time of it than your wife. The inestimable treasure of your love! But, Wilfrid, believe me, if she *was* your wife, she'd end by feeling as I do. Instead of hating me, and envying me my position as I expect she does, and sending you back to me as sulky as a bear, she'd much better make up her mind to enjoy you, in your good-tempered moods that we are never permitted to see, and thank her stars that she is free to get rid of you the moment you aren't nice to her. Free! Free! Free! Lucky woman! I wish I was her! Good God, how I long to be my own mistress, to take my poor life back again that I gave you, my life you've mauled and played the mischief with because you're selfish and mad——"

"Mad?"

"Yes, you are mad, with vanity and envy and out-of-work-ness. I sheer pity you, that's what I do—you and your poor shaky, groggy system, and overweening opinion of yourself! Work! Not you, except gilt-edged work, or shady financial touting that your pals don't even see their way to giving you! When thieves don't even trust thieves, good Lord——!"

She paused. He had not retorted.

She left the security of the door handle, and wrapping her *peignoir* firmly round her, came into the room and sat down opposite him. She spoke more softly, in almost motherly tones:

"What's up now? What has she been saying or doing to upset you so? You had better tell me—get it off your mind—consult some one outside. I'm the best friend you've got. Two heads are better than one full of whiskey! Don't look on me as your wife—*I* don't dwell on it, I'm sure—and tell me what it's all about this time?"

He looked at her, wistfully. "To tell you the truth——"

"Yes, do, for once."

"I was sitting with her last night, up to nearly midnight,

arguing. I've walked all the way home from Camberwell. Since I left her, she's been out and posted a letter to me. Shows how keen she is on her plan——"

"What's her plan?"

Well, if you must know, she's on at me—has been for the last month—to have another go at the old man——"

"Sir Joris? Never?"

"Yes. She wants me to have another try at him—a personal interview this time! Letters, she says, are no good. No more they are. I've found that. His brother, or that d—d young cousin of mine, opens them, and takes care not to pass them on."

"He's getting an old man now, and they don't want him worried. Well, go on."

"Ada—her name's Ada——"

"Thanks, I know."

"Ada thinks if I could once get at him, if he were to see me personally, that I'm decent-looking, and like him, and all that, you know, he might begin to look on things in a new light and see that he ought to do something for me, and——"

She interrupted. "And her! I see. On my word, I think I never heard of such a disgusting plan. Fancy going and pestering an old man that you've neither of you got any claim on, and reminding him of obligations he's discharged long ago You want him to grant you an interview—so that you can beg for yourself and your mistress! Why don't you take her with you? I daresay she'd show up well! What's her type? Gibson girl? . . . Well, I have nothing whatever to do with it. It isn't for me you're doing it—or for yourself even. . . . I have a home here, and so have you, Wilfrid! Realise that, for the old man and his advisers certainly will. And don't you let your mother know what you mean to do, unless you're in a hurry to inherit, for you'll upset her dreadfully. She's got no principle in the world but one, and that's not to have Sir Joris annoyed in any way. She's a good woman, she keeps her bargain. He behaved well to her and she to him, while it lasted. When it was over, he provided for her and you too, and incidentally for your wife. We can all three live uncomfortably on him—comfortably, indeed, if you helped to support us, and if your mother hadn't paid out so much capital to give you your start in life, and sent you to a good school and so on. He intended it, I expect, when he was so generous to her. You can never say you didn't have your chance. You had it and lost it. So do let an honest man alone, who treated your mother properly and hoped to have paid

himself clear of such encumbrances as you. Some men don't worry about entanglements of that sort, I can tell you——"

"For God's sake, shut up, Betsey! If you only knew how my head ached!"

She stopped dead.

"I'm sorry. I have said more than I meant. It's no good either. . . ."

She came nearer to him and took up the bottle that stood near his elbow.

"I'll have this," she remarked quietly. She put it into the cupboard that was farthest away instead of the one that stood open, and rammed the door fast with an extra turn of force. Returning to her husband, she removed the weak white hand from his face. . . .

"Look here, Wilfrid, if I know you at all, I can see that you are working yourself up for an act of folly! . . ."

He resisted her, putting his hands back to his forehead and shaking his head.

"Tiresome man! I don't thank Ada for sending you back to me with your head stuffed with idiotic plans in her own interest that can't come off. . . . Will you look me in the face, Wilfrid? I'm serious. . . . I want to make you understand that it is, at all events, no good your going to Sir Joris Veere without your mother's backing, and that she'll never give it. She's game, and will be to the last. She's a splendid woman, and to tell you the truth, if it weren't for her, I wouldn't stay with you another hour!"

"Try to keep yourself out of it, you d—d egotist! You stay here as her nurse, not as my wife, and she'll not bore you long. She has probably left all her money to you?"

"I don't know, I'm sure."

"Things," said he wearily, "are in such a tangle now that even if I were successful and the old man did fork out——"

"You wouldn't know how to allocate the shares, would you?" she assented, taking refuge from the impulse to brutal straight speaking in her sense of humour. She laughed horribly with her sweet red mouth. "Let me see? You—me—Ada——?"

"And two young children." He watched the effect of his speech on her.

He recoiled, for she turned on him like a tiger-cat. But her face, when he took in the sense of it, was not sternly or vindictively made up. It was, on the contrary, dulled and blighted with sudden mental suffering.

"I didn't know that, Wilfrid! On my word, I didn't. It—it alters—" she covered her eyes with her hands. "Oh, Wilfrid, you *have* hurt me!"

"Why? I never knew you wanted a child?"

"I did. Once. And you—" she dashed the tears out of her eyes. "It's no matter. I suppose you wouldn't have let this last fact out if you hadn't been drunk?"

"I told you because I was on the edge of a great resolve."

"Resolve! Nonsense! I shall speak to your mother and tell her to make you hear reason."

"My mother can't stop me. Tell her what you like. As a matter of fact, I believe she knows all about Wilfrid and little Katie."

She shuddered.

"You needn't shudder. They're nice little children—not a bit like their father. Now you see why I have to have money—more money! By the way, before you go, tell me how you got to know about Ada? Did my mother tell you?"

"No; she isn't so keen on talking about you. It is because you leave your papers about so recklessly. I warn you, everything I find I read—in self-defence. That letter you've just had from Ada, written, as you say, by the last post—" She pointed to an open drawer. "There, next your case of pistols! You'll try and shut that drawer, you'll fail, you'll swear, and you'll leave it. Later on, I shall have the pleasure of reading it."

"Damn you! Cat!"

He rose and went for her then. She escaped with a small contused wound on her left wrist, and her mouth twisted awry with derision and pain.

III

Betsey entered Miss Altamont's room and drew the curtains more roughly than usual, because she had just been knocked about, and her hands trembled. Then she turned round to the curtainless bed, and saw what she saw every morning, and hoped to see for a great many mornings more. A fair, fresh face, of almost faultless contour, round which a close-fitting lace night-cap was drawn with exactitude. And this vision, first seen after the long gulf of the night, daily suggested the same idea to Betsey. This moon face, grave, fresh, pink, had been a field, first for the economic struggle and afterwards for the devastating emotions of sex and the scorings of maternity. Jocasta, in frills; Cornelia, cursed, not blessed in her child; the valiant mother

of a *fainéant!* Out of strength, weakness; reason doomed, bringing irresponsibility into the world!

She kissed the bland old lady there where the lace edging of the cap met the waxen forehead. "Good morning!" she murmured, keeping her bleeding wrist behind her. There was no need to prove to her mother-in-law that her children's mutual relation was apt to be strained at times. Then thrusting her hands into a pair of housemaid's gloves, she knelt down and proceeded to rake out the ashes of the fire that had died last night and prepare a new one.

"Wilfrid is back," she remarked, in the intervals of ash-scraping and coal-laying. "He inquired what the doctor had said about you?"

"A graceful act!" pronounced the cold, hard voice from the bed. "And you told him about the aneurism that may leak any day, did you? Did it impress him?"

"He was rather queer this morning."

"Been drinking?"

"Ada—more! She's been worrying him!"

The fire crackled and danced. Betsey rose from her knees, shook down her skirts, replaced the gloves under the fender stool, seized her housemaid's box, and departed downstairs again to fetch Miss Altamont's breakfast, which Georgie was even now preparing.

Wilfrid's study door was open. She peeped in, and saw that he had got the whiskey-bottle out of the cupboard again and sat there drinking. The cat sat beside him. He caressed it now and then. . . . She paused, dubious. Her wrist smarted. . . .

"Now that he's settled down to it," she thought, "he'll forget about going to see Sir Joris, perhaps?"

She decided not to set his mother at him, but closed the door quietly and proceeded with the order of the day.

She took up a well-furnished breakfast-tray—the toast she had made herself—and watched Miss Altamont, propped on snowy cushions, consume it. The cushions had lace on them. It was Betsey's theory that old ladies, like babies, needed frills and fluffiness to make them go down. Then she "got her up." Miss Altamont's was a long, deliberate, and complicated toilette. When it was completed, she assumed her position for the day in the old knobby carved chair which was Betsey's own, and which had once stood in the vestry of her father's church. Sitting stiffly enthroned near the window, shiny stained boards leading the eye up to the sort of formal entablature she made with her invalid appointments, the old lady looked like an ivory carven

Buddha. Her white-frilled nightcap had given place to a black-frilled daycap, close and tight like the other one. Her dull black dress and shiny silk apron draped an obesity which was hardly vulgar, since it was the result not of self-indulgence, but of a mortal complaint. She was a very tall woman, with majestic shoulders, and no suggestion of a stoop. Her broad white forehead was like chiselled soapstone, her ears, small and set well back, bore heavy gold drop ear-rings on their tiny lobes. This was all the jewellery she chose to wear. Her lips were suave and full, red with a tendency to a purpler hue. She had kept all her strong teeth, small and sharp like a Frenchwoman's. Her eyes were grey and keen, but not remarkable ; her neat little nose and the ghostly straight line of the bridge of it gave Betsey an indefinable sense of moral assurance.

The younger woman cherished, but could not define, a perverse but real feeling of reverence for this popular personification of Vice Triumphant. Vice was not the word. Julia Altamont might have been wicked, but never vicious. Her appearance, in her daughter-in-law's opinion, was a guarantee of her immunity from the meaner forms of moral disease. Perhaps she had shed these tendencies, if she had ever possessed them, in the production of her son Wilfrid, who stood for the outcome of the inferior instincts of her nature. She did not love him, she had never caressed him since his curls were cut off and he told his first mean lie. She was ashamed of her gum-boil, her imposthume, and said so, cordially disowning him. Both these women now stood mentally aloof, and gazed at the creature that the one had brought into the world to be the life-partner of the other.

It was all so long ago and Miss Julia Altamont had not so much gained as dropped into a sort of a position, the result of her neighbours' unconscious appreciation of the woman's own natural force of character. Her inevitable invalidism served the purpose of an apt social manœuvre and relieved her of the necessity of testing her right of *entrée* into suburban homes. It was " the thing " to be kind to her ; people went to see her—to " sit with her," as they put it. The cynical effrontery which was the basis of her character amused those who did not understand it ; she dissembled it cleverly during her reception of visits from clergymen, for which she had a certain malignant predilection. It pleased her to pay church rate without entering the doors of the building whose upkeep she assisted to provide ; she enjoyed giving tea to the vicar of her parish, on the express condition that he was not to talk to her about her soul. Miss Altamont's soul, to the Rev. Sydney Barnes, seemed a hard thing to tackle, and he

preferred to believe and say, that in some mysterious way things worked together for good, even in a *ménage* so doubtfully policed by accredited guardian angels as Worksop House.

Seated in the full light, with her daughter-in-law ministering to her, the old lady, who "had her eyes" and needed no spectacles, noticed the bleeding arm, and realised its provenance.

"Where did you get that?" she asked dryly.

"The cat."

"Ginger isn't a goat!"

"Scapegoat—I see! Well, I was teasing him," Betsey replied cynically. "I can't help it, somehow, when he comes back from that woman. Rouses all the worst in my nature. I'm not jealous, not I, but I do resent her sending him back to me in such a bad temper always. And putting ideas into his head. Just when he's a bit low and can't resist them, but gets them on his mind. I must tell you, granny, he threatened this morning to go and worry Sir Joris for money."

"I've told him I wouldn't have that!" exclaimed Miss Altamont, rising in her chair. She subsided again by a strong exercise of will. . . .

"I will *not* excite myself!" she exclaimed. "It may kill me—make the blessed aneurism leak!"

"It strikes me you are quite proud of that old aneurism," said Betsey smiling.

"And Wilfrid isn't worth it, either. . . . Besides Sir Joris wouldn't see him. He will know how to protect himself. He always did. Betsey, did you happen to remind my precious son of my views on the subject?"

"Yes. That's why he hit me. I said a good deal. To tell you the drunken, honest truth, I don't believe he'll go at all. He's had a drop too much already to feel very energetic."

"Poor devil! . . . My noble son! . . . There's one thing, Betsey—does he know it, I wonder?—if he persuades his father to keep him, *I* won't, and that's flat! . . . Here, this won't do! My heart's jumping as it never did for Joris. Give me my cards."

The little shaped Patience-table was brought out and fitted close up to Miss Altamont's outline. She laid out the cards, with shaking hands, and presently she became intent and absorbed. Betsey watched her. . . . She liked to talk while she played, and assume that the game was played mutually.

"This is the most difficult Patience there is, that I am trying, do you know, Betsey? . . . Yes. . . . I've got it. It's come

off! . . . It doesn't come off once in a hundred times! Like the aloe!"

She swept up the cards.

"I couldn't bring it off again. Mustn't tempt Providence. I'll try an easier one this time! . . ."

She played on in silence. Her ear-rings drooped over the board. . . . Betsey watched, smiling kindly.

"Capital outlet this, Betsey! I confess I am a little upset by what you've told me, but I am not going to let it affect me. No, sir!"

"I'll go down and see if Wilfrid really is gone or not, shall I?"

"Do. Take care you don't let Ginger scratch you again!"

In a few moments her daughter-in-law returned, looking a shade paler.

"Well?" said Miss Altamont. "Is the gaol-bird flown?"

"I am afraid he has. And——"

"Don't tell me if it's anything disagreeable! I wash my hands of him. Don't speak. The game's the thing. I am very much interested in my game."

"You are a wonderful woman!" said her daughter-in-law, who was trembling.

"I am. What have you got in your hand?"

"It's Ada's letter. I found it in the drawer of Wilfrid's desk."

"Read it to me. Can you?"

"Can't I? I don't care." She began in a dead voice:

"'*I meant what I said to-night, Willie. This can't go on. I've just got about enough for the stamp for this*——'"

"Extravagant minx!"

"'*Me, with my two children, will be turned out of this hole next week. I told you. Did you take it in? Next week, and this is Sunday. Are you going to be able to give me anything to go on with and satisfy the landlord? You can't. I believe you. Then all you can do is to go, as I told you, to the old man in Cavendish Square and see if you can't touch him for a bit. He's your own father and doesn't deny it, it seems. He can't be such a beast as you make out—'tisn't natural. Giving it all to your mother as he has, what good does it do me and the children? There's no harm in asking. I'm asking. We're all asking, all of us, every day. He's used to it. Do you suppose you're the only son like that he's got—a man like him!*'"

"That's a nasty one!" observed Miss Altamont. "Go on, my dear!"

"'*Threaten him*,'" read Betsey, roused now and suiting in some sort her action to the words. "'*Say you're going to kill yourself. Be desperate. I am, I tell you. If you won't go to him after this, I will. The children haven't enough to eat. Not—enough—to—eat! Take that, you father that doesn't care for his children starving. Coward! Little Katie said the other day, "I can't grow, because I'm not watered enough." Where'd the child get it? But I knew what she meant. You go to your father, who's your father as you're hers, and tell him that. I'll not see you again, unless. Ada.*' There's her name to it. Did you ever?"

"Give me the letter!" bade Miss Altamont.

Betsey handed it to her and she put it in the slight pocket of her silk apron.

"I am inclined to think I have had enough excitement for this time, my dear. If you stay in the room, we shall talk."

Betsey left her.

IV

Betsey did not go to Miss Altamont again till one o'clock, when she took her her midday meal.

"Little Katie's preposterous speech, as reported, has given me quite a flutter!" the old woman remarked. "I shall really have to be careful of this rowdy species of emotions, or I shall be gone before you can turn round. That's the way it will probably be. It has set me thinking about my money. I have left it all to you, Betsey, child. Did you know that?"

"No. But Wilfrid was quite sure of it this morning."

"I have not told him. He argued from my feeling for you. He knows I'm fond of you and he's jealous. What do you mean to do, Betsey, when I die?"

"Need we talk of it now? I will not stay with Wilfrid."

"But if I leave you my money, it is on the conditions that you give my son a home."

"Then I must forfeit the money, dear."

"But what will you do instead?"

"Work."

"They all say that." She had a shrug of contempt.

"Some do it, too."

"Most do as I did." She looked up at her daughter-in-law inquiringly. "Do you blame me? I have never ascertained your views on that point."

"I thought it very clever of you."

"How so, bless you?"

"To manage to arrange the affairs of the heart on a business footing."

"I had no heart. I never grew one, till I was fifty, and it jerked and asserted itself to-day because a little child was starving."

"I can't say I believe in that child. She got that speech out of some board-school teacher's collection of *bons mots*."

"So you think I need not flutter over that little joke!" said the old woman sarcastically. "Fluttering is fatal, we know. You mean well, Betsey, if not by the child, at any rate by me."

"Why don't you send Ada a cheque at once," said the younger woman harshly, "if it would ease your mind? There's more joy in Heaven . . . ! You know the quotation? Such a mean one—one I resent. You want to support the sinner, I know, only you think I should object. You're wrong, dear, in that. I assure you, if the money's there, I don't care what wild undeserving charity it goes to. Write the cheque, and I'll post it for you with pleasure. I have no fine feelings about Wilfrid's *faux ménage* now. I haven't either taste or feelings left. I am rapidly becoming a mere suburban derelict."

"What under Heaven is that? Surely you exaggerate?"

"I can hardly describe it, except in exaggerated terms. It's the way I feel it—the way my environment affects me. It is as if the iron of inanition had slowly entered my soul. I am resigned, submissive, I am beginning to comply with my misery. I go to their teas, though not to their concerts—not that cup!—I belong to their magazine clubs and debating societies—talk of the subliminal mind, it's not nearly so deep down or so stupidly mysterious as the suburban consciousness!"

"You are not quite so resigned as you make out. But go on, you amuse me."

"Is it taking off some of the flutter? Good! . . . Well dear, I don't say I am quite dead and atrophied! We have glimmerings—of worlds not realised. Like the rest of us, I study the movements of the Free Peoples from the pink papers, and read of crimes I may not commit, and clothes I may not wear. We are all waking up a little. I believe it's Wellington's that has done it? We're a horde of savages in connection with a circulating library. Subsidised men of the press expound for us the primitive elemental passions——"

"If you knew them—intimately, as I have done—you'd know they were mere matters of routine—of business, my dear . . . not worth a quiet afternoon with a book!"

"We are seething with revolt, nevertheless. Mrs. Gedge has

told her husband that it's quite on the cards he may come back from his office one day and find her flown *à la Nora*—poor exploded old Nora ! Shows how behindhand we are ! The new Nora doesn't fly—she stays and sows her wild oats at home—Miss Zambach has read *Between the Shafts*, and is thinking of the best way to keep her nephews at home in the evenings, and Evangeline Simmons takes long bicycle rides to wear down her temperament. I like to see you laughing, dear. Now shall I get you out your cheque-book, and you can spend a happy couple of hours with it while I go out ? "

"Where are you going ? "

"It's Mrs. Wormeley's 'At Home' day. I didn't go last Monday."

"So you can stand Mrs. W. ? "

"She's all there is. I have to take my food where I can get it," the other replied bitterly. "These women of Wimbledon, with husbands dotted about in every office in London, are rather entertaining in the lump, and for what they represent. Mrs. Wormeley always reminds me of a fat white slug, crawling across the garden path after a shower of rain, lifting its silly transparent horns to see what is going on. She's overfed, overhoused . . ."

"You're so much cleverer than they are, Betsey, I wonder they tolerate you ? Come to me again when you've got your hat on, and don't mention the cheque-book until I do. I will not be jumped into benevolence ! "

Betsey obeyed. She wondered, as she stuck pins into her hat and peeped at herself, stooping, in the low glass that came no further than her waist, whether Miss Altamont would go the cynical length of asking her to post a letter containing the means of running her husband's illegitimate *ménage* for a month longer. But indeed, if this surprising duty were demanded of her, Betsey meant to show no temper. It would be a merely conventional manifestation of that vice, if she did, for she did not feel at all strongly about it. A little natural pique had succeeded her access of real vexation this morning, when Wilfrid had broken the fact of his paternity to her. She was moved now by purely business considerations. In the first place, she did not believe in the genuineness of the appeal of Wilfrid's mistress ; she thought the letter too theatrical to be sincere. In the second, she fancied that the state of Miss Altamont's exchequer did not justify an immediate outlay, supposing the generous impulse were still predominant when that lady came to examine her pass-book.

It was not. When Betsey returned to the invalid no mention

was made of the intended charity. Miss Altamont was concerned, however, quite unusually, about Wilfrid's comfort.

"Is there a fire in my son's study?" she asked.

"No. But there can be. I'll tell Georgie to light it."

"Do so. I may be hard-hearted and able to resist charitable appeals, but I have a troubling vision of the poor fool I bore wandering about the streets trying to make up his mind to go and get refused admittance in Cavendish Square! It is most unlikely that Sir Joris will allow himself to be approached. There is no reason why he should. A most indecent attempt at blackmail. Sir Joris knows how to deal with such cases."

"But I have heard—every one knows—that Sir Joris Veere is a great philanthropist—gives away hundreds every day, and feeds crowds of poor children in Shoreditch and Stepney!"

"He will perhaps benefit his grandchildren in the lump, then, and be instrumental in giving them a sixpenny tea at Christmas——"

"So charity will really begin at home for once!"

"Ha ha! . . . Well, be civil to Wilfrid, if you find him when you come back."

"Yes, I'll wash my cut and hold out the other hand to him," said Betsey shortly. "Milder counsels shall prevail. You may rely on me. I'll not be gone long. Good-bye!"

She went out of the room jauntily, though something, she knew not what, seemed to rise in her throat and choke her as she went downstairs. She took, mechanically, a box of matches from a shelf in the hall, and entering her husband's study, struck one after the other in the vain attempt to get a light. She was clumsy, ineffectual, a sense of guiltiness oppressed her. Yet Miss Altamont had not scolded her; her solicitude for Wilfrid held only a mild note of reproach for the healthy woman who had irritated the nervous man belonging to them both.

Wilfrid had struck her! But what was a blow compared with the lash of words that she wielded so well!

She knelt on the warm hearthrug and stoked Wilfrid's fire, carefully, eagerly, artistically. It was badly laid, and did not burn—at first. She then sat down, her arms under her knees, and watched the feeble progress of the flame. As it slowly gained strength, she felt a distinct sense of elation. She had at last done something wifely for Wilfrid. She made up her mind not to leave the fire till its future was assured. . . .

It was nearly four o'clock. She fell into a reverie. Her arms relaxed, her gloves fell out of her lap. Thoughts of all kinds,

underlaid with a permanent basic mournfulness, passed through her mind. She wished she could shake off her dreary mood of self-condemnation. She wished Georgiana would come in and get scolded for laying the fire so badly ! . . .

The fine heat caressed her cheek. The fire was getting on well. There was no need for Georgiana. She would hunt out a pair of Wilfrid's slippers in the inner room, put them not too near the fire, and go out to distract herself, as usual, by the languid exercise of her finer wits on the clumsy mental apparatus of her acquaintance. Sitting in their horrid bephotographed stuffy drawing-rooms with a cup of tea in her hands, she would smilingly " prod them up," show them their own views, which she more or less shared, exaggerated to ridicule, tease them, agitate them, amuse them. She was not loved, but she was judged worth her salt—at any rate her tea, by the stultified wives and sisters of the business men who flocked out of the suburb every day by the morning train to seek the cheerful arena of combat, leaving their females at home to chew the cud of sweet and bitter fancy. Betsey had quite a little reputation in Wimbledon, where her talk counted for much, and her beauty, naturally enough, not at all.

V

" Mrs. Mortimer Wormeley. At Home, Fridays. Four to six-thirty," was on her cards, and was an institution. The housemaid cleaned the silver on Friday mornings ; the spare seat that would hold three nicely was brought into the drawing-room from the hall, a ninepenny pot-plant was bought, it was clean-cushion day, and the club magazines all had paper-knives negligently stuck through them.

Crump, the baker in the High Street, provided the one-and-threepenny Madeira cake and the coffee-rolls. Every member of the set who passed Crump's window knew his famous make, and could account to a certainty for each slice of the sample that would be sent up to The Pines in good time on the afternoon of the important day. Mrs. Wormeley's friends had got into the way of attending alternate Fridays, so that a computation of attendances would put you in a position to know exactly which members of the set would share the cake with you on any given Friday.

You were not, as it is confidently believed within the pale, invited to " bring your sewing." No one really does sew in the suburbs. If Mrs. Altamont put needle to thread it was of sheer necessity. The bitter cry of the riven seam or the sprung

button, only, could impel her, and she used the bored, perfunctory stitch of a Robinson Crusoe whose furs had to be held together. Nobody's clothes, as a matter of fact, needed careful mending, for they were, as a rule, bought cheap and thrown away as soon as they "went wrong."

Mrs. Altamont could trim a hat, and often did. She used pins.

To-day, after closing the door of Worksop House with a snap, she directed her steps towards Wimbledon and walked along the frontage of the few best shops in a ruminating manner. She gazed carelessly, but shrewdly, into their glazen depths. . . .

She had a feather.

One of those blue soft felt hats, tilted a little on one side, and with a knowing tweak taken in the crown, would use it up very well. This was how she managed to dress beautifully, if a little casually, for almost nothing, worshipping at the shrine of the goddess of the pin-makers.

She entered the shop, picked out her hat, paid ready money for it, and carried it away with her in a paper bag.

She passed the railway station and began to scale the slopes of villadom on the west. She went by Magnolia Lodge, and The Beeches, and Oakwood, all so much alike that they might, she thought, as well been styled comprehensively The Peas. Finally she came to The Pines—one pine, and so dusty !—a grey stuccoed house standing in its own scanty grounds. In the circumference two flower-beds and one drive had been engineered. Here Mrs. Wormeley held the jousts.

Footsteps on the moist gravel of the drive told her that the At Home had begun. She rang the bell that said Visitors, and was at once admitted by Selina the maid. She deposited her parcel on the hall table and coat-rack deftly combined, concealing the inelegant suggestiveness of the paper bag under the flaps of Mr. Wormeley's great-coat. The impedimenta of Mr. Wormeley's Sunday employment and enjoyment were *en évidence* and she sighed, wishing that Wilfrid could be induced to take to the great derivative of clerks and business men. In the other corner Master Albany's perambulator presented unexpected snags. On one of these she caught the braid on the bottom of her gown, previously anchored there by fairy stitches.

"Oh, bother ! Lend me a pin, Selina, will you ?"

Selina kindly took the familiar implement out of the bib of her clean apron. "I'm sorry, I only seem to have one, ma'am !"

"Oh, one'll do," answered Mrs. Altamont, hastily adjusting it. "Who's here ?"

"Miss Zambach and Mrs. Gedge."

Profound and sinister yells from above-stairs punctuated the names.

"Oh, dear, there's Master Albany off again!" exclaimed Selina. "Whatever have come to that child? He do scream so? Anybody 'd think we was half murdering of him!"

"They'll know you aren't doing it by giving him soothing-syrup anyway!" said Mrs. Altamont vindictively, passing into the drawing-room. "I'd give it him if he were mine, little wretch!"

Mrs. Wormeley sat in a cosy corner formed by the Chesterfield sofa. It had a shoulder that let down, making room for one person beside her. That person got a clear view of Mrs. Wormeley's mystery of tea-making—of tea-watering, for the nodus of strength was put in outside, to be diluted to taste through the afternoon. On her left hand stood a rickety three-decker cake-stand, bread and butter, rolled, on the top layer, the famous Madeira from Crump's on the intermediate one, and the hot cakes, which were the heaviest, on the lowest dish of all. Byngo, Mrs. Wormeley's terrier, who had generally been freshly washed, glared at the assemblage of good things. Mrs. Altamont's eye caught Byngo's, indubitably, and Byngo at once knew that she would be accessory to some portions of the tea-cake finding their way into his mouth during the course of the afternoon. He didn't mind it being heavy.

Mrs. Wormeley was stout and fair, with ear-rings that somehow gave her a sort of respectable Stuart air. Her grey hair was waved and in *rouleaux*, and she wore a jewelled inset watch on her broad bosom as if it were a medal. Her voice was low and yearning. She shook hands cordially with Mrs. Altamont and called her by her Christian name.

"Albany *is* letting himself go!" Betsey remarked as she shook hands with the other two ladies.

"He doesn't seem to get on with his new nurse. She has a moustache, but is otherwise quite nice," the mother explained, and the two other ladies pursed their lips slightly. Mrs. Wormeley was not clever with servants, and even Selina's demure little cat-face that they had all grown to like, in her two months' occupancy of The Pines, would probably not illumine those halls for as long again. Mrs. Altamont was being installed next to Mrs. Wormeley—the place reserved to the latest comer. . . .

"But sha'n't you have to go to him?" inquired the childless woman.

"He's only exercising his lungs, so Dr. Gedge tells me,"

replied Mrs. Wormeley indifferently. "Bread and butter, or tea-cake, Betsey?" Crump's cake was offered with the second cup only. "Down, Byngo! Is not that a ring at the bell?"

"It's Evangeline Simmons, I expect," said Miss Zambach. "Do you know if she's heard from Drake's about her novel?"

"Oh yes—didn't you know? He's wild to publish it, and she's going to let him. She's got to put down eighty-five pounds as a guarantee, and won't get a penny till two thousand copies have been sold. He says they'll easily do five thousand, and she's to offer him her next two. Isn't that nice?"

"Very," said Mrs. Gedge. "Poor girl, I do hope it'll be a success! They *are* so badly off."

"It's sure to pay if she makes it improper enough," said Betsey gaily.

"But not too improper," said Miss Zambach, "for if it is too *au delà*, my dear, Wellingtons won't have it on their shelves, and I shouldn't be able to afford to buy it."

"Evangeline must curb herself and manage to keep to the windward of Wellingtons!" said Betsey. "Cleverer people than she have had to. It's a necessary condition of literary existence now! What——?"

The door opened suddenly, and the maid Selina appeared, propelled evidently by some force from behind and commendably anxious to keep command of the door.

"Please, Mrs. Wormeley, it's a lady. She says she's heard Master Albany all down the road, and——"

"Excuse me," said a somewhat raucous but perfectly well-bred voice from behind Selina, "I am a member of The Society and I feel I must make some inquiries——"

The young lady who, cuckoo-like, shoved the little linnet of a Selina out of the way, was tall and stately, and did not look more than twenty years old. She was pretty in a simple, innocent way, and her long ear-rings accentuated the childishness of her face. A single pearl on a loop of diamonds hung from under her chin, lengthening her long throat. The four suburban women were at once duly impressed by the style and grooming of the impertinent visitor. Mrs. Wormeley rose, and scattered the biscuits, and Byngo hastily profited.

"There must be something wrong?" pursued the girl, evidently with an effort toning down her natural arrogance. "A child in mortal terror running naked down the street——"

"My son Albany——" stammered Mrs. Wormeley.

"Is it your son?"

"Yes, and my son hasn't been out to-day. I never heard

such—impertinence! Coming into another person's house! If my husband were here——"

"Mr. Wormeley would know what to say to you!" exclaimed Miss Zambach, coming forward with a spirit.

"Really!" murmured Mrs. Gedge, still under the sway of the style and the pearl drop.

The young lady stood firm. She was evidently unused to be contradicted. Mrs. Altamont contributed to the conversation for the first time. Gently, indifferently, she spoke.

"Why don't you let the young lady look at Albany and see for herself, Madge? Perhaps she will be able to tell us how to stop him screaming?"

The suggestion hung fire a moment. . . .

"I'm sure I wouldn't do anything of the kind," murmured Miss Zambach, but Mrs. Wormeley, hypnotised by the pearl drop, had already turned and was leading her visitor to the upstairs regions, whence the screams still came fast.

Miss Zambach stooped and picked up the biscuits, restoring those that were least defaced to the dish. "I suppose you'll expect Madge to offer her a cup of tea when she comes down again, Betsey?" she asked sarcastically.

"Why not? I should. But Madge won't rise to it. Here, Byngo!" She offered the dog tea-cake. "I say, I shouldn't be surprised if the mannish nurse gave warning on the spot!"

The others considered Betsey spiteful, and were about to tell her so when the door opened and Selina admitted a tall weedy girl in rusty tweeds, who was told at once what was going on upstairs.

"Oh, Betsey, you're killing!" exclaimed Evangeline Simmons, the future beguiler of Messrs. Wellington, for it was she.

"Why not? It was the simplest thing to do. She's only a child. She meant well."

"Coming here spying——!"

"Well, who minds being spied on? The sooner people get rid of that silly notion about an Englishman's house being his castle the better. Privacy is only our desire for differentiation while the world is so vile. We don't trust our fellow-citizens to be nice! We pay to go first class because we dread the old lady who offers peppermints in the third. We are ashamed of ourselves in every attitude. But, bless you, in the time that's coming, people won't be shy of others, won't mind going on platforms, or singing at concerts, or eating in public, and giving themselves away generally. They won't care to blush unseen——"

"If they blush at all!" said Mrs. Gedge severely. "People like you, Betsey, with a perfect craze for publicity—notoriety, I may say——"

"I adore it. And I'll never get it. Suburban seclusion for ever—ochone! ochone!" Mrs. Altamont chanted softly. "I should love to be the heroine of a *cause célèbre*. Sh'h! I hear voices."

"Somebody do set the door ajar!" said Mrs. Gedge.

The little thin hall buzzed with apologies. Then the listeners heard the hall door closed, deferentially, and Mrs. Wormeley, brimming with consequence, re-entered her own drawing-room.

"She wouldn't stay tea, Betsey, though I asked her. Said she was engaged to tea at Garsington House!"

"Old Lord Druid's!" said Mrs. Gedge. "My husband attends him!"

"A thoroughly nice girl!" continued Mrs. Wormeley. "I talked to her and explained things. She agreed with me that Albany is a purely modern product, the over-sensitised offspring of two highly strung personalities, Mortimer and myself——"

"Born and bred beyond the radius," said Betsey, delicately mocking. "Born to soul-searching as the sparks fly upwards—and a morbid outlook, like the rest of us. Far away from the central radiance—the hub of the universe, Mayfair——"

"I can't say I care about Mayfair so much," said Miss Zambach. "But I could do with Kensington. Bernard Shaw speaks at the Town Hall there sometimes. But here, with nothing to do but go and try to get the books we want from Wellingtons——"

"Wellingtons has done it!" said Betsey. "They are responsible for our divine discontent. Until we could, for the humble sum of twopence a volume, procure the literature of our destitution and learn all about ourselves and our unruly organs, and the world's cruel measures of repression, we bore it better, we could buoy ourselves up with the idea that we were healthy happy outsiders, living the right life—though dreary. But now we know that we are all wrong, all clogged up, arrested growths, unfit for treasons, crimes, and stratagems, out of it all, out of life, where virtues and vice flourish together. I can go on?"

"I agree with Betsey," said Miss Simmons. "Ten years ago—I am, alas, old enough to remember it" (she was the youngest there!)—" we were contented in our blind suburbanity. We dressed out of Mrs. Wellwood's shilling patterns, we shopped and argued with tradesmen about things that really didn't matter,

we never thought of asking our husbands—I haven't got one, but I know—our husbands what they did all day long when ostensibly at the mart, we never looked beyond the big catalpa-tree in the garden, as we sat and hemmed blinds. But now, thanks to Wellingtons and some dear darling revealing authors they haven't got on to boycotting yet, we are seething with discontent, instinct with revolt——"

"And all owing, Betsey says, to the flood of literature let loose on us by the libraries," pondered Mrs. Gedge. "I sometimes wonder if it's wise. Is it any good for us to know that we are as capable of high emotion——"

"Oh, well, Wellingtons seem to have got a fright lately," broke in Mrs. Wormeley. "They are trying to pen us in again. There were two or three books I read reviews of last summer in the magazines and so on, and when I asked for them the girl told me the management had boycotted them."

"Too bad!" said Miss Zambach, "treating us like children!"

"That's why I have joined the Suffrage movement," exclaimed Evangeline. "And Socialism too. There's one morality for the rich and another for the poor. It's the *poor* intelligent who suffer. Untrained rich idiots who can afford to buy a book right out can read what they like."

"Plank down a voluptuous four and six, and you can take your favourite drug home with you," suggested Mrs. Altamont.

"There's Lee-Brice's new book, now," Evangeline sighed. "I am dying to get it, I am sure it would appeal to me?"

"It wouldn't appal *you*, at any rate!" put in Betsey.

"*The Red Corpuscles*," said Miss Zambach. "But they never will have his books, so it's no good."

"But what does the title mean?" asked Mrs. Wormeley.

"Oh, I suppose it's the vigour—the amount of life-force in us," explained Evangeline. "The red corpuscles in the blood and what they drive us to do. That's the way I read the title."

"Splendid crimes, eh?" said Betsey. "Though I should think the average murderer was a person of low vitality—of a sluggish imagination, if not an anæmic one. He takes such very short views—never sees the gallows at the end of his line."

"I didn't mean murder crimes exactly. Crimes with a love motive, more. What they call *crimes passionnels?*"

"Not many of them, in England at least. There's money at the bottom of every murder, I think," said Betsey briskly. "No, my dear Evangeline, make up your mind, there's no hope for you here, so be quick and marry out of mediocrity. Get into

Mayfair, or at least Kensington. I'm going now. Are you coming my way ? We might call in at Wellingtons and see if we can get *The Red Corpuscles*. I don't see how they *can* go on boycotting a reputation like Lee-Brice ? "

" I bet they do though ? Their regular people complain and say they can't send their daughters to grub in their shelves as they like."

" Who wants girls to get out the books they like ? Lee-Brice doesn't write for girls. If he did, Evangeline wouldn't care to read him. Come on, my dear, I hope you don't mind being seen with a paper parcel ? "

The two went out together.

" Betsey's splendid, isn't she ? " said Mrs. Wormeley, rather apologetically. " She's got so much decision of character. When she told me to take that girl upstairs I just had to obey her. And as it turned out, I was glad I had done so. Such a lady-like person, and a friend of Lord Druid's too."

" He's a dipsomaniac," said Mrs. Gedge parenthetically. She had a great pull, physiologically speaking, in these discussions, being a doctor's wife.

" But a man of good family before a dipsomaniac," said Mrs. Wormeley. " That husband of Betsey's, now !—he drinks and nothing to redeem it."

" Poor Betsey ! " said Miss Zambach.

" There's no harm in Mr. Altamont," Mrs. Gedge assured them. " Not vicious, only weak. My husband calls him a first-class degenerate."

" Oh, I should have thought that would have expressed Lord Druid more ! " said Mrs. Wormeley.

" Mr. Altamont's illegitimacy preys on his mind rather, I imagine," volunteered Mrs. Gedge.

" More than it does on his mother's," Miss Zambach remarked skittishly.

" I do believe Betsey admires her for that," Mrs. Gedge contributed. " She nearly says it. She thinks her so strong."

" Well," remarked the hostess, " it does take some strength of mind to defy public opinion as the old woman does and call yourself Miss when you're the mother of a grown-up son ! Mr. Wormeley has never been quite reconciled to my calling there. I only did it once to put matters on a footing. And now Betsey is glad to come here, pretty often. She's so amusing. But I'd rather have her here than go there. There's something sinister about that old woman. She just stares me down. And the house is a most uncomfortable, and ill-regulated house. It speaks for

them both. Betsey's not a bit a natty woman. She doesn't seem to care to have things pretty about her. Not a chair-back in the house, and no photographs ! "

" Perhaps she's got no friends to send her them ? And no money to be done herself," said Miss Zambach, fixing her eyes on the large cabinet-sized presentment of Mrs. Wormeley in her Court dress with a shimmering lake of train in front of her feet, in which she appeared just about to plunge. " And she certainly wasn't presented on *her* marriage ! "

" No ! " sighed Mrs. Wormeley sympathetically. " Dear me, how I have let myself drop out of things ! This that I have on," she indicated the dark satin dress that draped her, " was made out of the train, dyed ! "

(To be continued)

THE MONTH

EDITORIAL: *THE CRITICAL ATTITUDE—The Passing of the Great Figure; After the Destruction of the Veto, by* J. A. HOBSON; *The Control of Foreign Affairs: A Proposal, by* H. N. BRAILSFORD; *Les intérêts de la Russie et les droits de la Finlande, by* LEO MECHELIN; *The Rights of Finland at Stake, by* PROFESSOR J. N. REUTER; *The Place of Satire in Education, by* FOSTER WATSON; *Publications Received*; *Historie de la Princesse Zulkaïs et du Prince Kalilah, by* WILLIAM BECKFORD

THE CRITICAL ATTITUDE

The Passing of the Great Figure

As far as space served us last month we attempted to adumbrate the fact that the great figure as a factor in life has passed almost out of the sphere of things. Conversing largely and frequently with men of varied vocations and pursuits, we have attempted to discover whether, even amongst those who are distinctively specialists, there exist for each of a number of groups any really dominating personalities. And to some extent these may be said to exist. Thus, a scientist would give you Sir William Crookes; a person interested in international matters might suggest His Majesty the King. A certain group of poets would insist upon the claims of Mr. Doughty or of Mr. Robert Bridges; we, ourselves, in speaking of the novel have mentioned Mr. Wells and Mr. Galsworthy. But at the end of it we imagine that there is only one figure of the present day which has a hold upon the general popular imagination.

We were the other day at a place of popular entertainment. And it must be remembered that it is in places of popular entertainment, alone, that the pulse of the unthinking can be felt. And that the unthinking—that those who get their views of public questions from a combination of traditional feelings and of the emotions of the moment—that these form the great bulk of our population we can hardly doubt. At public meetings for or against any particular measure or policy the tone of mind shown is of too specialised a character. By some trick of human nature a person inclined to Tariff Reform will attend meetings only which are addressed by Tariff Reform speakers; Socialist orators will attract only Socialists, and as a general rule Suffragettes will listen only to Suffragettes. This is curious, for one might imagine that humanity, anxious to be upon the right side, would also be anxious to hear both. Or one might imagine that humanity, anxious to confute its opponents, would be anxious also to hear the ablest arguments that its opponents possessed. But nothing of the sort. More political causes have been lost by failing to consider what the enemy had up its sleeve in

the way of popular appeal than were ever won by fervid and right-minded oratory. The fact is that what humanity desires, passionately and almost before all other things, is a creed. It craves for accepted ideas; it longs more than anything for a mind at rest. The moment that questions social, political, or æsthetic—the moment that questions at all abstract leave the broad ways of black and white, the great bulk of humanity abandons for good the consideration of such questions at all. And nothing is more difficult than, at the present moment, to diagnose the exact condition of English popular psychology. All questions have become so exceedingly complicated, there is so little opening for moral fervour that the tendency of the great public is more and more to leave all public matters in the hands of a comparatively few specialists. Practical politics have become so much a matter of sheer figures that the average man, dreading mathematics almost as much as he dreads an open mind, is reduced, nevertheless, to a state of mind so open that he has abandoned thinking—that he has abandoned even feeling about any public matter at all. His vote at a General Election will be influenced by some mysterious catchword, by some accidental happening of the moment or by some private scandal or facial characteristic of the upholder of one or other cause.

At the popular entertainment to which we have referred one of the "turns" consisted in the very clever impersonation of a number of prominent personages. When the entertainer announced that he was going to show us Mr. Balfour there began amongst the audience a considerable volume of applause. And this rose to something still more considerable upon the presentation of an excellent counterfeit of the features of the Leader of the Opposition. The announcement that Mr. Lloyd George would be shown us was received with applause more considerable than that which had greeted the similar announcement of Mr. Balfour. Similarly the applause bestowed upon the impersonation of the Chancellor of the Exchequer was vastly more enthusiastic. A certain number of hisses came from the more expensive seats, but, since it was early in the evening, these were sparsely filled. Mr. Burns attracted comparatively little attention. The entertainer then said: "I will now present to your attention a gentleman who is known to all of you." We speculated whilst, with his back to the audience, he was adjusting his wigs and other properties, as to who this gentlemen could be. We thought of winning jockeys, of aeroplanists, of foreign Ministers, and of His Majesty the King. The entertainer turned suddenly round and

presented us with a cocked-up nose, an eye-glass and an orchid. And from the very places whence there had burst forth an applause of Mr. Lloyd George so loud that we had imagined it could not have been surpassed—from those very upper parts of the house there burst forth cries, howls, stamping of feet—a noise of enthusiasm such as reduced the approbation of Mr. Lloyd George to a faint platonic sound.

This is a very curious and interesting manifestation, and one which seems to bear strongly on the question of the great figure—for what is the great figure but, in the words of the entertainer, "A gentleman who is known to all of you"? And, carefully advising with ourselves, we have been unable to think of any other British subject of whom this could remotely be said. Of the Victorian guard of great figures there remain to us only Mr. Frederic Harrison and, perhaps, Mr. Thomas Hardy. But Mr. Thomas Hardy until towards the end of his writing life never made any moral appeal. He was just a writer: he left alone the Riddle of the Universe. And, at bottom, it was by force of crying out, "Be moral and you will have a good time in one world or another," or it was by force of providing an alternative for the dogma of a seven-day creation, that the Victorian great figure gained its prodigious hold upon the hearts of the people. Tennyson, Browning, Carlyle, Ruskin, Gladstone, Disraeli, Cobden, Bright, Darwin, John Stewart Mill, Cardinal Newman, or Mr. Frith, whose death occurred only yesterday—of all these great figures it would be absurd to say that they did better work in their several departments than is being done to-day. But they had, as distinguished from the actual work that they did, a certain extraneous faculty—the faculty of appeal. They were able, that is to say, to make a great deal of noise apart from the actual work that they got through. Thus Darwin, who has done more to change the psychology of the Western world than any man since Jean Jacques Rousseau—Darwin, as far as the outside world is concerned, was only very secondarily a scientist. What he stood for was the downfall of priestcraft. Similarly, Mr. Gladstone was not so much a great Chancellor of the Exchequer or the introducer of certain measures into the House of Commons; he was a man who preached, who stood for virtues of a certain order. Mill stood for liberty far more than for political economy, Carlyle for physical force and public efficiency than for historic sense; Browning was the prophet of optimism, Tennyson the singer of middle-class altruism, Cardinal Newman was a beloved

ascetic rather than an efficient Churchman, the Prince Consort was Albert the Good. Nowadays it is the work itself which counts. It counts in the eyes of the worker; in the eyes of the public, it counts for very little. For the public is always looking out for the great figure.

That is why Mr. Chamberlain is the only gentleman whom every one knows—for Mr. Chamberlain does stand for an enormous principle. He pays comparatively little attention to detail: he never did pay much attention to detail. The note which he sounded when he was a Radical was one of emotional common sense. The note which he sounds to-day is that of emotional patriotism. But the emotion which he used then as now was not an emotion of altruism. It was one of a rather black, a rather bitter aggressiveness. For it should have been visible to the Darwinians and to the Victorians that when, fairly efficiently, they slew priestcraft and revealed religion, they scotched also several of the things for which priestcraft and revealed religion seemed to stand. Thus, if, as has been said, Protestantism is dead, so also is altruism. We do not wish to assert finally that either of these facts is the case. But we are fairly certain that for the time being and until others arise the great Victorian figures were the last of the priests.

Darwinism, however, shook so severely all the traditional standards, whether of religion, of ethics or of morals till that time existing, that although the great figures of Darwin's age functioned along the lines of those traditions their priestly glamour vanished with the passing of themselves and their contemporaries. The conditions of everyday life and thought have changed so entirely that we very much doubt whether a Ruskin or a Gladstone would to-day find any kind of widespread dominion. Divergent views find to-day such an easy expression that the mind at all inquiring is perpetually driven now in one direction, now in another. In the Victorian Era an official altruism reigned as the unquestioned standard whether of the religious or of the agnostic —a sentimental altruism embracing all humanity, all races, all types. To-day, although in the one column of a newspaper, as it were, we may read the altruist dogma that the province of good government is to work for the greatest good of the greatest number, in another column or half-way down the same column under another heading we shall see advocated the employment of the lethal chamber for the feeble-minded. And it will not be so very long before advocates will be found—

advocates serious and public—for the extinction, painless or otherwise, of the physically weak, of the unemployed, or even of the merely unfortunate. We have, of course, no desire to advocate the claims of the one or the other school of thought. But whether the true end of government be the raising up of the weak or the improvement of opportunity for the strong, we must resign ourselves to the fact that both sides will find expression and almost equal opportunities for expression. And in between the two extremes will be found innumerable shades of opinion, each shade finding its expression and contributing to the obscuring of the issues. And this produces in the public mind a weariness, a confusion that leads in the end to something amounting almost to indifference. Thus, supposing that Mr. Gladstone should nowadays call attention to misrule in Macedonia, he might very well find a tendency upon part of the public to say that the Macedonians are one of the weak races of the world, and that the sooner and the more efficiently they are stamped out the better it will be for a world which is already growing over-populated. Or—and this is still more likely—he might find that the public mind was utterly unable to make the effort to interest itself at all in the matter of Macedonia. Of course, in the question of oppressed peoples, as in all other questions, certain technical factors operate to produce special results. Thus, supposing for Mr. Gladstone championing the cause of Macedonia we substitute the figure of Mr. Ruskin championing the cause of certain neglected artists, Mr. Ruskin would be met with an indifference certainly more profound than that accorded to the champion of oppressed peoples. For, on the one hand, to the Victorians the figures of Chatterton starving in a garret and of Keats pining and dying beneath the lash of the *Quarterly* reviewer—to the Victorian these figures disappearing so miserably, to be so gloriously revived by a posterity that was the Victorians themselves—these figures had about them something great, romantic, and glorious. Art, too, had about itself still a sort of super-glamour due to its comparative rareness. But nowadays we cannot discover any lately deceased Chattertons or Keatses. If we did discover them we should regard their discoverers with suspicion. And the mind is being so perpetually diverted by new topics that we could not for very long keep before us either the figure of Keats or Chatterton, either of Macedonia or of any of the oppressed peoples. It is not so much that we are languid as that the public brain cannot by any possibility, under the perpetual claims, under the perpetual assaults upon its attention, remain for very long steadfast to

any particular subject. There is a perpetual conflict in the public mind between personal problems and public causes. Thus, the execution of Señor Ferrer raised an enormous storm throughout Europe. Yet within how very few days was its place taken by that of another trial—the breaking upon a wheel of Madame Steinheil? Here certain broad emotions of a publicly altruist kind are wiped out by others of a more or less intimate nature. Señor Ferrer represented liberty, democracy, the rights of free speech, and a whole group of kindred human aspirations. Madame Steinheil is a woman who, having conceded that her antecedents are not of the most savoury, battles manfully to save her neck from the guillotine and her fame from the most horrible aspersions in the midst of a mystery that she alone can really unravel. And we can imagine a very proper man and a very good citizen saying: "I should be more than human if the case of Señor Ferrer occupied the whole of my attention: I should be less than human if I devoted no thought at all to Madame Steinheil."

For, after all, the province of the proper man is to say: "*Nihil humanum a me alienum puto.*" And that being so, how is he to-day to discriminate? He will have to decide on one and the same morning what he thinks as to the attitude of the House of Lords towards the Budget and as to the successful beating of the height record by the latest aviator; he will have to consider the state of the Navy and as to whether British-owned masterpieces should be prevented from leaving the country, and, if so, how the prevention is to be brought about. He will have, in addition, other private interests. He may have brought before his mind the latest play at the Haymarket, the quarrels between the professionals and the Football Association, the form of probable starters for the Grand National, the rival claims of two explorers, or the latest publication by a resident of Harley Street of a new diet. There will also be an infinite number of still more trifling matters, each claiming its share of his attention.

And though none of these things is in itself of necessity below the attention of an efficient member of society—though, indeed, the most hard-thinking of us may, and possibly should, have his small relaxations, his hobbies, and the childishnesses with which he will keep his soul, as it were, sweet, the tendency of the public Press is to force the relatively unimportant things, in a perpetually flickering cloud of small claims upon the attention, into the foreground. We are not, of course, intent upon consider-

ing which of these human matters is unimportant. It would be pharisaic to say that a large portion of humanity is reprehensible because it takes an interest in the fate or in the struggle of Madame Steinheil. But there can be no doubt that the thought and the capacity for thinking thoughts are of very great importance to humanity. Thus, though the disappearance of the great figure is not in itself a thing to be wholly lamented, yet since this disappearance is, as much as anything, a symptom of a disease of thoughtlessness it is almost wholly to be lamented. For, for a man who is at all interested in the manifestations of his day, any connected thought is almost a matter of impossibility. At the same time, for a thinker to withdraw himself from the life of his day is almost a fatal matter. It is a fatal matter not so much because he will become a specialist as because he will lack the corrective influence of irreverential contact with his kind. If he is a person of distinction he will gather round him a small body of sycophants who, by applauding his every word, will exaggerate all those of his tendencies that are capable of exaggeration. If, on the other hand, he find neither followers nor admirers he will become that most disastrous of things, a crabbed, solitary introspective.

And the case is even worse with his public. For the public of any man must necessarily be less of the thinker in his special department than he himself will be. And thought, that exercise of the brain, has always been and always must be a painful matter to the average citizen of these islands. The Englishman, as a rule, is like a schoolboy; if his master is invested with sufficient authority or has a sufficient moral prestige to claim his attention the ordinary Englishman will, laboriously and with some disinclination, follow the train of thought that is prescribed for him. And the great figure of the Victorian Age was very much in the position of a schoolmaster endowed with great moral prestige. Thus, almost every house of the City merchant or of the Lancashire employer of labour during the latter years of last century would be found to contain a copy of the later works of Browning or of Ruskin. And these volumes—*Asolando* or *Sesame and Lilies*—would be laboriously perused by a head of the house, whose attitude at such times would very much resemble that of a fourth-form schoolboy painfully reading through the *Bacchæ* of Euripides. This attitude of the commercial man of the nineteenth century was the last dying survival of the mediæval superstition that something occult attached to Learning, that something profoundly and materialistically

valuable attached itself to Thought. Nowadays that feeling is altogether dead. It seemed to die with the war in South Africa. And for this there was very good reason. For it was the struggle with the Boers that made the fortune of the more frivolous Press. And it was in those days that the Englishman found a necessity for existence in the snatching of news, turning swiftly from one short sensational paragraph to another, and filling his mind with the sharp facets of facts hardly at all related the one with the other. And having come through that engrossing and protracted trouble he had acquired the habit so strongly that he has never abandoned it. It should be remembered that the South African War was the first vital struggle that this nation has been engaged in since the telegraphic Press was really organised. Before that time, though this tendency was gradually dying, the public was accustomed to accept with equanimity news that was a day or two old—to accept it with equanimity and to ponder over it for some small length of time. But nowadays, even in remote country districts, the Englishman is overwhelmed every morning with a white spray of facts—facts more or less new, more or less important, more or less veracious. And the commercial man who in the old days read his Browning or his Ruskin as a duty now equally as a duty plays his round of golf to increase his physical well-being, since this perusal of facts will have stilled that position of his mind that craves for the printed page. Moreover, it should be remembered that the chief purpose of Thought as of the Arts is the promotion of expression between man and man. And whereas in former days conversation concerned itself, for lack of other topics, more frequently than not with the latest book or the latest idea, to-day the world appears to be so full of a number of things material, technical, or of gossip that there is no necessity, in whatever rank of life, for conversation to flag for one minute. This is, of course, a somewhat exaggerated statement of facts. It is probable—though this is somewhat difficult to ascertain, and may be merely a matter of opinion—that as far as numbers are concerned in certain strata of Society or of certain individuals scattered up and down amongst all ranks there might be, if they could be collected, a number of persons anxious to be presented with generalised and ordered thought—a number as great as existed in the nineties of the last century. What has been lost from the comfortable classes has probably been gained or more than gained by the spread of education amongst the comparatively penurious. Indeed, amongst this latter class we have found from experience that there is probably a greater desire for

serious literature than amongst the former. But the fact remains that the production of thought is an expensive process. The thinker must be educated in a very expensive manner, and the machinery of putting his thoughts before the public is also expensive in the extreme. This calls into play, even before the thinker will have made a bare subsistence—this calls into play the capitalist. And the object of the capitalist is, reasonably enough, not so much the cultivation of a not very small, not very wealthy circle, but the obtaining of an infinite number of small profits and of quick returns. An immense reading public has come into existence, and the desire of those who cater for it is not to promote thought, but to keep it entertained. In this way it becomes increasingly difficult even so much as to attract in any way the attention of the few who think, drowned as they are amidst the immense multitude of those who have learned no more than to desire to be entertained.

THERE is, moreover, a general suspicion of all generalised thought abroad in the land to-day. Rightly or wrongly, the general thinker—the man whose speculations cover wide fields—is regarded with suspicion by the world. Versatility is taken to be an evidence of shallowness, and the mind which occupies itself with more than one subject is suspected of a want of application. From one point of view this is a good thing. It means to say that if the public has not yet learned to detect the charlatan it has at least progressed sufficiently far to suspect facile workmanship. Thus two contending forces are everywhere at work. Upon the one hand we are creating specialists everywhere: we will listen to none but specialists. Upon the other we are making it commercially almost impossible for the specialist to exist at all. We will listen to no one else: we will hardly listen to him. And this tendency is as visible in material things as in the world of thought. Just as the large public gets its ideas from syndicated presses, so it gets its bodily nourishment from what are called "canned goods" and proprietary articles. A medical officer of health of one of the poorer districts of London has informed us that most of those amongst whom he worked had acquired, if not an actual distaste for cooked meat, at least an active preference for potted articles that were either eaten cold or could easily be heated up. In the same district baker's shops are comparatively rare, mothers preferring to give their children cheap sweet cakes which had been manufactured by great companies. They avoided thus both the trouble of spreading bread with butter and the expense of the butter itself, butter

being one of the most costly articles of diet in general use. Thus, the cook, who is the specialist of every household, is being more and more dispensed with throughout the land, just as the jam, cordial, and preserve-maker has disappeared from the household of the comfortable. And throughout country towns the specialist tradesman, who used to flourish in considerable numbers, is starved out if he is unfortunate, or converts his business into a limited company, amalgamating it with others, reducing his prices, as a rule deteriorating the quality of the commodity that he produces, or, at the best, depriving his commodity of his personal touch.

THERE are those who deplore this tendency : there are those who see in it a great hope for the future. On the one hand it becomes increasingly difficult for the consumer to know where to go to procure those things which impart all the finer flavour to life ; for the producer, whether of Thought or of liqueurs, it becomes increasingly difficult to gain a subsistence by giving to his ware the attraction of the finer flavour. He must either reconcile himself to starvation or make the attempt to appeal to a market relatively uneducated. The old order, in fact, is changing ; the new has hardly visibly arrived. On the other hand, the Modernists say that this is only democracy getting ready to do its work. The great popular taste, they say, is only whetting itself with these trifles and sweetmeats. It is getting ready to think higher thoughts, to read and to produce nobler books, to clamour for finer food, to lead more beautiful lives. We are not, these enthusiastics claim, so much at the end of an old era as at the beginning of a one when all that is beautiful in old things will be multiplied a thousandfold and spread abroad through the land. It is true that the cheap reprint has almost stopped the production of the better class of original new work. On the other hand, the cheap reprint is spreading in its millions throughout the country examples of a very much better class of work than was prevalent in any cheap form in the day when the penny dreadful reigned alone. Nay, more : it is creating a million-fold of new readers, it is creating readers that never before existed. And these readers, having begun with, having become cloyed by works of an amiable mediocrity, will go on to demand in a thousand places the works inspired by the older and finer spirit. The old great figure is dead, the present finer specialist is starving to death. In years a long way ahead there may rise up a great many of finer specialists, each one of whom will be a Great Figure. This is all the hope there is for Thought and for the Arts. E. R.

After the Destruction of the Veto

By J. A. Hobson

Readers of Lord Morley's *Life of Gladstone* will understand that it was possible for a great Liberal statesman of the Victorian age to conduct a long political career of large and fruitful effort without confronting in its full shape any of those great social-economic issues which now in this, as in every other civilised country, occupy the front places on the stage of politics. The tenure of land in Ireland did indeed engage his serious attention, but the hardly less urgent problems of rural and urban ownership in Great Britain never really occupied his field of vision, while constructive legislation coping with pauperism, sweating, unemployment, old-age destitution, or engaging the State in constructive work for the developement of the productive resources of our land and labour, lay outside his conception of practical or even legitimate politics. Nay, the whole conception disclosed by these new issues of the State, as an instrument for the adaptation of the economic and moral environment to the new needs of individual and social life, seeking to secure full opportunities of self-developement and social service for all citizens, was foreign to the Liberalism of the last generation. Now in England, as elsewhere, these positive, constructive and primarily economic proposals are clamouring for consideration. The old *laissez-faire* Liberalism is dead. Its early demise might indeed have been predicted from the time when Cobden recognised the necessity of "freeing" the land of England as he had helped to "free" her trade. For the effective liberation of the land, as we now perceive, involves large permanent measures of public control, and brings in its wake a long series of further enlargements of State activity in transport, credit, housing and other matters. The slow education which the land question has conducted upon the nature of monopoly and socially created values, was bound in time to bear fruit in a growing recognition of similar elements of monopoly and social values, inherent not only in liquor licences and other legalised monopolies, but everywhere throughout the industrial system

where competition is impeded or estopped. So, quite apart from any theoretic socialism, there has been formed in the public mind a firm conviction that, wherever these obstructions to economic liberty are found, the State must exert its powers, either to restore free competition, or, where that is impracticable or unwise, to substitute a public monopoly, in which all share, for a private monopoly the profits of which pass to a favoured few.

The New Liberalism has absorbed this teaching and is preparing to put it into practice. These legal or economic privileges, which impede or cancel competition, are also recognised to be responsible for the degrading toil and poverty of the lower strata of our population and the equally degrading idleness and luxury of the upper strata, the two counterparts of the same economic facts. These truths are constantly becoming clearer to a larger number of our citizens and are generating increased energy for political reform.

But when the people, possessed by this new energy, seek to realise their objects by political endeavour, they continually find themselves thwarted by certain seen and other unseen obstacles. The demands even for redress of crying grievances are denied, delayed or side-tracked, or else conceded in some trivial, unsatisfying form. Hence a huge waste of reform energy, bitter disappointment and a sense of impotency which more than all else paralyses the popular spirit of reform.

What are these obstacles? For the most part they consist of economic interests firmly entrenched at certain coigns of vantage along the march of political achievement. Every one of the social-economic reforms to which I have alluded has to fight its way through a series of electoral, legislative, administrative and judicial processes in any one of which it is liable to meet the open or the secret opposition of a powerful party, class or clique which believes the proposal to be injurious to its interests. Sometimes this opposition of an economic interest is complicated and screened by some other feeling or judgment, of a social, patriotic or even a religious character, which serves to hide even from those who are the strongest opponents the naked force of the self-interest which directs their opposition.

Now the main importance of the present crisis in English politics consists in the fact that a strong searchlight has thrown out in the most vivid colours one persistent barrier to reform. The House of Lords has come out into the open. Under the thin and quite ridiculous pretence of thought-reading the national will, they have substituted the economic and social

interests of their order for the national welfare which they profess to serve. Every measure sent to them by the Commons which directly affected property or the control of property, especially in land, houses and licences, those forms of property most strongly represented in their House, they have either destroyed or mutilated, and encouraged by success they have even dared, in the defence of their property, to invade the region of financial legislation reserved by long constitutional usage for the sole control of the House of Commons.

The first effect of this action has been to convince social and economic reformers of the folly of endeavouring to pluck the fruits of democracy before the tree which should bear them has been shaped and grown. The false pretence that democracy exists has proved the subtlest defence of privilege. The belief that the popular will is realisable effectively through the representative system in England, France, or the United States, has caused a greater waste of reform energy than any other single cause. For so long as this belief prevails, reformers will refuse to undertake the laborious work of perfecting the constitutional machinery of democracy. In England, as elsewhere where a fervid passion of social reform has arisen, reformers have been indignant at the suggestion that it may be more economical to postpone the immediate realisation of their proposals until they have removed obstructions in electoral and legislative institutions. They are tired, they say, of tinkering with political machinery : a popular franchise already exists, the people can now get their will if they stand together and shout loud enough. Now all who have made a close study of the actual operation of the so-called democratic machinery, in Europe or in America, perceive that this view is false. Ostrogorski's study of the mechanics of the party system in the United States and in Great Britain shows to what poisonous abuses the forms of representative government are exposed, and how feebly and irregularly the real spirit of democracy pulses through them. The defects of representation are not the same in the two countries. In America it is the "spoils," corrupting the party system from the national convention down to the word "primary," and the rigours of a written constitution which preclude amendment. In England it is the refusal to give completeness to the representative forms and to provide democratic safeguards against abuses of them.

The experience of our Liberal Government during the last four years has forced upon us an era of constitutional reform. But there is even yet little realisation of the magnitude and the

variety of the constitutional changes that must ensue if democratic government is to be achieved in Great Britain. So deeply ingrained has been the very principle of Opportunism in our politics that it is safe to say that the great majority of our reformers at present ask nothing more than the destruction of the veto of the House of Lords, while many even would be well contented with such structural reforms of the Second Chamber as would subordinate the hereditary to a new representative element drawn from the official and professional classes. Though feeling for the moment may run high against the insolence of a body of landowners and rich men presuming to encroach upon the prerogatives of the representative House, there will be serious risk, after the preliminary battle has been won by the Commons, of a compromise which shall leave an effective veto upon ordinary legislation to a sham-representative Second Chamber. When the first line of trenches has been carried by the democratic attack, a stout rally will be made for a reformed Second Chamber, retaining the same constitutional powers as the present House of Lords, only abandoning all claim to interference with finance. A whole crop of specious proposals will be raised for a Senate of great, wise and eminent persons, not elected by the direct vote of the people but appointed by methods which will ensure a permanent majority of members who, by instinct, training, economic interests and social connections, can be relied upon to defend vested interests and to check the "extravagances" of a popularly elected chamber. But suppose more drastic counsels should prevail, and that no reformed Second Chamber should be left with an effective veto. Shall we then get real democracy? Will the great measures of social reform which are pressing move forward surely and swiftly towards achievement? Not at all. There can be no more foolish error than to represent the veto of the House of Lords as the only, or even the chief, barrier to the free realisation of the will of the people in this country. The true importance of this present crisis is that it must furnish an introduction to the far larger task of restating the principles of democracy and recasting the forms which shall express them. To this task the destruction of the Lords' veto is but the prelude. Suppose this destruction was accomplished, in what case does democracy stand? In name we have a single-chamber government, an all-powerful elected House of Commons, the chosen representatives of the people. These men are supposed to initiate and determine legislation, to control the executive government, and to decide what revenue shall be raised and

how it shall be spent. Will they really and effectively exercise these powers? Not at all. Though much has been said of the very real encroachments made by the House of Lords upon the power of the Commons during Liberal Administrations of the last quarter of a century, little attention has been drawn to the continuous encroachments made upon the privileges of the House of Commons during the same period by the Cabinet. "The English system," writes Professor Lowell,* "seems to be approximating more and more to a condition where the Cabinet initiates everything, frames its own policy, submits that policy to a searching criticism in the House, and adopts such suggestions as it deems best; but where the House, after all this has been done, must accept the acts and proposals of the Government as they stand, or pass a vote of censure, and take the chances of a change of Ministry or a dissolution." Nor does this express the full measure of Cabinet control. For the party whip, often enforced by pressure through the local caucus and the use of party funds, commonly confines all "searching criticism," except in rare instances of independence, to the Opposition, relieving the ordinary "follower" of the Government from any real part in shaping the measures to which he gives his formal assent. The ordinary Parliamentarian, it matters not upon which side of the House he sits, has virtually no opportunity of introducing any Bill with a chance of carrying it into law; the time placed at the disposal of private members has been continually reduced; this liberty of taking part effectively in debate has been curtailed at the discretion of the Government, while large restrictions have been placed upon the ventilation of grievances by questions. Almost the whole time and energy of legislation in the Commons are placed at the wellnigh absolute disposal of the Cabinet, which decides what measures shall be introduced, what time shall be allotted to them, what portions of them shall be discussed adequately or at all, and which shall be dropped or presented to the House of Lords. On foreign affairs the House of Commons has become virtually impotent. The Foreign Secretary needs rarely appear in the House of Commons, needs seldom answer questions, and can take the most revolutionary steps in foreign relations without seeking even the formal assent of the representatives of the people and without troubling himself to give them full information afterwards. Since foreign policy determines in the main our naval and military expenditure and policy, this autocracy in foreign affairs virtually restricts the power of the Commons

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over finance and, through finance, over the whole range of domestic policy.

I am well aware of the explanations that are given of this enlargement of Cabinet control. The complexity of the modern work of central government is such, we are told, that the most rigorous economy of the time of Parliament is needed to execute it : the new Cabinet control is not a planned invasion of old parliamentary liberties but an expedient necessary for the conduct of public business. This may well be true, but none the less the process marks a diminution of representative government and a failure of democracy. For the shifting of control from the House of Commons to the Cabinet must at best be taken to mean the functioning of the popular will at two removes instead of one. But it means more than this. The Cabinet is seldom a just reflection or representation of the majority of the Commons in which the government is nominally vested. Though it must be sufficiently representative to command the faithful allegiance of the party, that consideration, interpreted in the light of the facts adduced above, admits considerable licence. No one would, for example, contend that the Liberal majority returned at the polls four years ago would have chosen a Cabinet composed as was the actual Cabinet, if a party vote by secret ballot had been taken.

Thus the great practical increase of Cabinet power in legislative and executive work, however expedient for other reasons, must be regarded as a reduction of popular self-government. In point of fact, the substance of this grievance is even heavier than the form. For rank, social position and tradition still weigh so heavily, even in Liberal Administrations, that a comparatively small number of ruling families are always largely, often dominantly, represented upon the Front Bench, without real reference to personal ability. Though such a statement is necessarily insusceptible of proof, no one acquainted with the *personnel* of recent Governments is likely to dispute it. It implies a very real distortion of representative government.

It will doubtless be said, and private members often comfort themselves by repeating it, that though the Cabinet does make all important decisions, it considers and consults the party, listens to deputations of members and moulds its policy accordingly. Here, of course, we are again in the region of immeasurable influences. But while a Government with a small majority must evidently be careful not to alienate votes, a situation which gives importance to cave-men or "kickers," a strong Government is able to defy any ordinary recalcitrance

and usually browbeats grumblers into submission. And the whole tendency of our party system, working upon the present exaggerated swing of the electoral pendulum, favours strong Governments.

But it is not only the encroachments of Cabinet rule that have curtailed the authority and liberty of the House of Commons. The caucus system and the growth of organisations for the promotion of particular reforms, or for the furtherance of special trading or other interests, have, by exacting pledges, gone far towards changing a Member of Parliament from a representative into a delegate. Now, while genuine delegacy is a defensible mode by which the popular will may obtain expression, the sort of delegacy now imposed is definitely undemocratic. Under it small well-organised local minorities are frequently enabled to obtain a body of pledged support in Parliament far in excess of that to which their numbers entitle them. The illusory character of many of these pledges, though averting the worst consequences of this abuse of our representative system, does not prevent them from exercising a most demoralising influence upon the course of politics. Moreover, this practice excludes from parliamentary life many men whose independent character forbids them to give the pledges necessary to secure election.

Were the proposed destruction of the Lords' veto to leave the House of Commons vested with supreme authority of government, a large stride towards effective democracy might seem to have been taken. By securing an extended franchise, shorter parliaments and adequate reforms of electoral machinery, the representative assembly might at least become a genuine expression of the popular will. There would no doubt be many, even among Liberals, distrustful of unicameral government, where the absence of a written constitution would confer upon a single chamber, possibly elected on some heated party issue, an unlimited power to change the very foundations and fabric of government. But this danger would be greatly enhanced by the fact that the mere abolition of the veto would establish, not the supremacy of the House of Commons, but a Cabinet autocracy qualified in certain electoral conditions by the power of some enclave or "cave" in a party. There are circumstances under which this state of affairs might easily lead to Cæsarism, where a magnetic party leader either succeeded in capturing the imagination of the populace or in engineering a supremacy among competing politicians.

The consideration of the wider issues of democracy cannot

be postponed. Though in pursuance of our customary method of dealing with "one thing at a time" we may first proceed to abolish the Lords' veto, we cannot halt there. That change, as we perceive, will not leave other things as they were, but will demand a thorough-going many-sided reconstruction of our representative system, unless we wish to abandon the cause of political self-government.

Several reforms are needed, besides the destruction of the Lords' veto, in order to convert the present representative system into an effective instrument of democracy. The House of Commons must be made more accurately representative, and representative government must be supplemented by a measure of direct democratic control. In order to make the House of Commons representative of the will of the people, it must be in direct and frequent contact with the needs, aspirations and experience of the whole people. Though capacity to serve the State is the true basis of the suffrage, and this capacity must be greater in some citizens than in others, no safe method of enforcing this theoretically justifiable discrimination is discoverable. Adult suffrage is the only practicable expedient for securing the required contact between representatives and people. In every country where democracy has taken root the basis of representation has broadened towards this shape. The admission of women to an equal voice with men thus needs no separate argument. It inheres in the very nature of democracy. For a democracy maimed by the exclusion of the direct representation of the needs, aspirations and experience of half the people would be a mere androcracy.

With the same object of rendering the House of Commons a truer expression of the popular will, some form of proportional representation must be incorporated into our electoral system. Three definite evils are traceable to the defective working of the present system. First, there is the party majority in the House of Commons exaggerated beyond all proper proportion to the aggregate electoral majority in the country, and lending itself, as we have seen, to Cabinet autocracy. Secondly, there is the abuse of pledges imposed upon candidates by minorities which, under proportional representation with fairly large areas, would spend their electoral strength upon electing a few zealous supporters of their special causes. Thirdly, there is the loss to the State of many of her ablest and most honourable legislators who cannot hope or desire to obtain election under the existing system of polling. The single transferable vote, applied in areas of sufficient size to enable every considerable minority to

be represented, is so simple and so manifestly just a reform that it could not fail to win popular acceptance, if a fair opportunity were secured for the recasting of our electoral machinery.

If to these major reforms we added the destruction of the present plural vote and the payment of members and electoral expenses out of public funds, we should have secured the forms of sound representation. But two democratic requirements would still remain unfulfilled. Though proportional representation would mitigate the tyranny of majority rule, and would curb to some extent the autocracy of Governments, astute party management or personal ambition might generate new abuses such as attend the play of the group system in some continental legislatures. Moreover, it is unlikely that the reforms of electoral institutions here proposed would of themselves so strengthen the House of Commons as to reverse the tendency towards increased Cabinet control. A real and firm check upon abuse of power on the part of a Cabinet and a House of Commons which was called upon to deal with new and urgent issues, upon which the electorate had not been consulted, is an esssential of democracy. Nor are such the only occasions which require a check. Elected legislators, mostly amateurs, will of necessity be influenced strongly, sometimes predominantly, by those able permanent officials who, in the intricate processes of modern government, must necessarily come to play a growing part in the construction and administration of laws. Now this official mind, eminently serviceable, has its inevitable defects ; authoritative, excessively conservative, mechanical, and usually contemptuous of the lay civic mind, it is apt to use every opportunity to impose itself upon new legislative proposals, and to substitute, as far as possible, the official will for the representative will. Now, though in nine cases out of ten this co-operation of the skilled official may he highly beneficial, there will be certain cases where his determinant influence will definitely conflict with the wisdom and interests of the people. This is no matter of mere theory. The fact cannot be blinked that, for some time to come, high officials in this country will, by their economic interests, their upbringing and their social habits, be in most imperfect sympathy with the aspirations of democracy. Consciously, or more often unconsciously, these class sentiments or interests will obtrude themselves into the advisory and formative work of legislation and administration which falls to officials. How should it be otherwise? Until a far fuller measure of equality of economic and intellectual opportunity exists than now, a powerful support must continue to be rendered by

the higher bureaucracy to the defence of vested interests upon the political field.

The only effective check upon the defects or abuses of representative government is a direct appeal to the people. This referendum is based upon a recognition that no form of representation is perfect, and that certain particular defects in representative government can best be met by a special and direct appeal to the fount of government. The will or consent of the people is in fact always claimed on behalf of every important measure of our legislature. But there exists no means of testing this claim. Electoral pledges, or post-electoral resolutions of caucuses or of other gatherings of electors, are, as we have seen, ineffective and often injurious methods of conveying a mandate or a consent. But the growing part they play in politics must be interpreted as an instinctive endeavour of the popular will to express particular judgments and to supplement the purely representative principle by some closer and more intimate control.

In every democratic country there is evinced this growing desire of the people to register its will through certain determinant acts of judgment upon concrete issues. The desire is commonly fed by a distrust of the efficacy of a representative system which so often lends itself to the manipulation of business or class interests or falls under the too complete control of professional politicians. But the roots of the desire lie far deeper down in the nature of democracy. There is in every people a half-conscious recognition of the fact that the will of the people is not really operative unless it is able to perform concrete acts of government. The instinctive craving for self-realisation through responsible conduct is a collective as well as an individual feeling. This feeling is not satisfied by the act of choosing a representative once in five or six years. The instinct of self-government is starved on such a fare. As an individual needs the responsibility for concrete acts of conduct in order to maintain and educate his personality, so it is with the collective personality of a nation. This is no revolutionary demand, but one enforced by the sober study of national psychology. An electorate will remain little better than a "mob" so long as it is treated like a mob, deprived of all opportunity of sober reflection and judgment upon intelligible issues, and goaded at intervals to orgies of electoral excitement in which passion, prejudice, business and sporting instincts are set to determine the representation of the people.

It is not, however, my purpose here to argue the case for

Adult Suffrage, Proportionate Representation and the Referendum, nor to consider the important effects which such measures would involve in the working of our party system. I merely desire to insist that a surgical operation upon the veto of the Lords must entail important after-treatment in the shape of constructive constitutional reforms, and that such proposals as are here set forth must at an early date be brought into the forefront of practical politics. The evolution of democracy would have proceeded far more slowly had the veto of the Lords, following the Royal Prerogative, slowly narrowed down from precedent to precedent until it had passed into the limbo of rudimentary survivals. The reversal of this process during the last two generations, for the political defence of vested interests, has brought fuller consciousness and purpose into the struggle for popular government. The application of constitutional force against the unconstitutional conduct of the Lords will compel the people to heal the breach they will have made by large considered measures of reform. It is of profound importance that the necessity of this constructive work should be clearly recognised, and that thoughtful politicians should set themselves without delay to the educative work that it involves.

The Control of Foreign Affairs

A Proposal

By H. N. Brailsford

Democracy is one of the many words which have suffered a vital change in their content during the past generation. We have almost ceased to mean by it a system of government which rests on the vigilant control of an organised multitude. We are satisfied if our rulers strive, by whatever machinery, to pass such measures and impose such taxes as seem to agree with the interests and the inclinations of the multitude. While the term has gradually suffered this subtle change in its implications, a whole department of public affairs has slipped beyond public control, and the process has taken place with the acquiescence of both our governing parties. Through the life-times of Palmerston and Russell, Gladstone and Disraeli, foreign affairs were not merely the subject of animated debate; they were often the dividing-line between parties, and formed so recently as 1880 one of the chief issues in a General Election. The general acceptance of the doctrine of "continuity" in foreign policy has raised our more recent practice to a principle. It is now almost unthinkable that the two Front Benches should make war with each other on any question involving our relations with a Great Power, or that the Opposition Whips should tell against the Foreign Secretary if his conduct were challenged. The new departure dated from our occupation of Egypt. Imperialism, however it might be qualified, became from that act onwards an accepted national policy. The necessity of securing our doubtful position on the Nile involved us for twenty years in a constant hostility to France, as it kept us on good terms with Germany. It was no less the desire to secure Egypt which prompted the *entente cordiale*, and so involved us in the present struggle to maintain a balance of power in Europe between the Triple Alliance and the Triple Entente. It was no less necessary to exclude from effective influence that wing of the Liberal party which might have put an end to the occupation. The gradual permeation

of the Liberal party with Imperialism has brought about the dominance of a steady and singularly uniform pressure exerted by men whom domestic questions may sharply divide. There is a governing class which in foreign affairs is always in power, whatever label the administration wears. It is the class entrenched in Society, in the Clubs, in the City, in the Conservative Press, and in the Diplomatic Service. It is strong enough to dictate the choice of a Foreign Secretary even under an advanced Liberal administration. A Radical could no more be Foreign Secretary to-day than a Catholic may be Lord Chancellor. This half-anxious national conspiracy has succeeded in stifling debate and producing an impressive show of unanimity. The Radical tradition does, indeed, survive, more particularly in the Press, but even the Radicals have acquiesced in an arrangement by which they barter their nullity in external questions against their dominance in home affairs. Few of them realise how slight is their influence. Their contact with foreign affairs is chiefly through such humanitarian questions as the problems of Macedonia and the Congo. In session after session the two or three afternoons allotted to foreign affairs are almost invariably consecrated to these themes. The public witnesses a certain activity on the part of various leagues and committees, which usually succeed in making some slight impression on the Foreign Office. It does not realise that the ability of the Foreign Secretary to intervene even in such limited questions as these is determined by our general European policy and our habitual attitude towards the Great Powers. No leagues, no agitations, no public meetings attempt to influence our general continental policy. Save for a few brief and almost meaningless references, our relations with Germany have never once been discussed in the House of Commons during the past five years. Understandings have been formed which are virtually alliances. It is generally believed that we have entered into military obligations towards France, if not towards Russia. In veiled phrases, which the comments of the *Times* have rendered more explicit, Sir Edward Grey has adopted the principle which the older Radicals used to repudiate so vehemently, that we have a duty to maintain a European balance of power. Twice at least a European war has seemed possible, a war, moreover, in which our obligations to other Powers might have involved us directly. Over all these momentous departures in our policy the House of Commons has hardly even sought to exert control. It is often curious about Macedonia or Persia, but Sir Charles Dilke is, I believe, the only member who has ever attempted to raise the larger issues of

our European policy, and even he has never sought to point his criticisms, to force an answer, or to state them in terms which less expert minds would readily understand.

There are three constitutional checks upon the Foreign Office—Parliament, the Cabinet, and the Crown. It will be generally admitted that the first of these has almost ceased to operate. It renders important services only by exercising the right to put brief questions to the Minister on current events. Sir Edward Grey has pointed out that no other Foreign Secretary in Europe has to face such an ordeal as this. That is true, but the formal interpellation is probably a more valuable weapon when the object is to criticise some large trend in policy or to elicit an explanation on anything more vital than a mere question of fact. The right of making "interpellations" in the continental sense of the word, by adjourning the House, has now for all practical purposes been destroyed by the "blocking motion." The formal powers of Parliament are very limited. Its assent is not required for a declaration of war, so that it is particularly easy for a British Government to drift or rush unchecked into hostilities between August and February, the months when Parliament does not normally sit. Nor is its assent required for treaties, unless they include financial provisions. They can be discussed only after they are already ratified, and it is now the practice to delay their publication until after the House has risen. The King and his Foreign Minister can make war and peace, they can annex and alienate territory, they can assume obligations which may oblige not only us, but our children, to go to war in support of an ally in a quarrel not our own. The House can exert its authority only retrospectively, by censuring the Foreign Secretary for some act already consummated, or by availing itself of one of the two occasions which arise in the year to declare its want of confidence in him—the debate on the Address and the voting of his estimates. In practice it would be only in the direst emergency and under a Government already discredited that such a catastrophe could occur. A Radical-Labour revolt would always be met by a rally of the Conservatives to the support of the Foreign Secretary. But the risk is hardly thinkable. The reason is obvious. A vote against the Foreign Minister is a vote against the entire Government, and his defeat in almost any conceivable circumstances would entail a dissolution. Few members, if any, are prepared to jeopardise Free Trade for the sake of a scruple, let us say, about Persia, or to risk the future of social reform at home to save the skins of a few Egyptian peasants from an unmerited

death or a public flogging. Members vote for or against a Government; they do not vote on the merits of any particular foreign issue. There, no doubt, and in the doctrine of continuity, lie the reasons why debates have become infrequent and perfunctory. The House of Commons is not likely to recover the authority it has now lost. None but a federal chamber like the German Reichstag, which is occupied exclusively with Imperial affairs, can hope under modern conditions to make its authority in foreign questions respected.

The Cabinet might seem at a first glance to be in a better position to make its control effective. It consists of picked men; it deliberates in secret; it may have the documents before it; above all, it can intervene before an act is irreparably consummated. But the history of the Victorian period, so far as we yet know it, points to the conclusion that the Cabinet is not an effective check. A strong Minister, if he is popular in the country, can usually overrule it. Lord John Russell and his colleagues were rarely able to curb Palmerston even with the help of the Crown. They feared that if he were dismissed he would avenge himself by going into opposition. This was, in fact, what happened. He was forced to resign towards the close of December 1851. By February 1852 he had unseated his late colleagues. A Minister may not altogether trust the policy of the Foreign Office. He may even criticise it in the Cabinet. But he has no effective power of protest save resignation, and that may involve the sacrifice not only of his own career, but also of some domestic measure or policy to which he has especially devoted himself. There is always a reluctance to interfere with any Minister who is himself, as Russell said of Palmerston, "a good colleague"—a phrase which means one who respects the independence of others in consideration of enjoying a like freedom himself. Two other circumstances tend to render the Foreign Secretary exceptionally free from control. He spends little money, and cannot, therefore, be checked by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. It rarely happens that many of his colleagues are expert enough to meet him on his own ground. But we are not left to conjecture. The origins of the Crimean War are now fairly well understood. It is generally known that only four members of the Aberdeen Cabinet were kept informed of the details of the negotiations which made war inevitable. It is also on record that in 1865, in the early phases of the *Alabama* question, Lord Russell rejected both the demand for compensation and the proposal for arbitration entirely on his own responsibility, and before the Cabinet had even discussed the question.

If a Cabinet is content to delegate to four of its members the effective responsibility for making war, and to leave to the Foreign Secretary an authority so untrammelled that he may reject an offer to arbitrate on an issue which might well have been a cause of war, it is clear that it fails even in the gravest matters to exercise its functions of control. There is no reason to suppose that the sense of corporate responsibility in the Cabinet has become stronger since 1865.

The control exercised by the Crown is undeniably real. The publication of Queen Victoria's letters has informed us by what an obstinate struggle she maintained it against her Whig Ministers. The influence which she kept from encroachment has certainly not diminished under her successor. Her point of view was usually logical, consistent, and inspired by a certain ideal of justice. But it was also almost invariably anti-nationalist and anti-democratic. The world in which she moved was the world of monarchs and governments. Nations she neither knew nor recognised. Of the Italian people during the *Risorgimento* she never once caught a glimpse. The events of 1848 were for her only a series of aggressions by the King of Sardinia against the Emperor of Austria. She discussed the fate of an Italian province as a lawyer might dispute over the ownership of a freehold. She argued with ability for her own ideas, but she never even affected to speak for the British people, or professed to voice their views while she sought to oppose the policy of a Minister fresh from a triumph in the House of Commons. The control exercised by the Crown over foreign affairs is, in short, open to all the objections that may be raised against the control of the House of Lords over legislation. It is almost certain to be anti-popular, and it is almost certain to be one-sided. One must allow for individual whims and eccentricities, but the steady influence of the Crown undoubtedly tends in the long run to make our foreign policy even less democratic and more conservative than it otherwise would be. It is a powerful reinforcement to the vague but steady pressure of the governing class, whose opinions are the only force which really deflects or forms the personal policy of a Foreign Secretary.

There is no escape, it seems to me, from the conclusion that our foreign policy is actually the policy, not of a nation, but of an individual acting in close consultation with a number of officials, who in their turn reflect the dominant tendencies of a small upper class—the class which regards the Empire partly as a career, partly as a field for investment. The doctrine of "continuity" and the impotence of the House of Commons have made it

practically impossible for the other classes which can dictate legislation and modify Budgets to exert any appreciable weight whatever over a diplomacy which none the less derives its authority from the fleets which they furnish and the taxes which they pay. The causes which have brought us to this pass are likely to be permanent. It is probably the new importance of foreign investments in our economic life which has created the new unanimity of the governing class in foreign affairs, irrespective of party ties. The House of Commons is never likely to assert itself against the overgrown power of the Cabinet while our present party system survives. Nor does it seem to me probable that a nicer balance of parties, even if it made the Labour Party and the Irishmen the arbiters of our destinies, would bring about a change. The Labour Party would barter its support for social legislation, the Irishmen would insist on Home Rule, and both of them, to gain their immediate ends, would be fain to leave the two older parties to manage foreign affairs in their own way. A new situation would arise under any scheme of "devolution" or "Home-Rule-all-round." Parliament would at last have time to attend to foreign and Imperial questions. But even then it would be dominated by the struggle between Free Trade and Tariff Reform, and members could no more vote freely about Persia or Egypt than they do to-day. A vote against the Tsar's visit (let us say) might still be a vote against Free Trade. Finally, there would remain as an obstacle to full debates the enormous difficulty of any public discussion of a delicate international situation carried on by a House which knew the facts imperfectly and by hearsay.

Any mechanism which aims at securing for the representatives of the whole nation a real control over foreign policy must satisfy two conditions. It must admit of secrecy. It must also be able to effect its purpose without involving at every turn the fate of the Government and the continuance in office of the Foreign Secretary. There is probably more secrecy than is at all desirable or necessary even in the semi-public diplomacy of our day. The veil of secrecy too often covers a claim to do beneath it what no man who respected his own honour and valued the good opinion of his fellows would dare to do openly. A more public conduct of international controversies would go far to render wars and aggressions almost unthinkable. The fear of causing a panic on the Stock Exchange, the dread of alienating public opinion, and the necessity of being accurate in statement and cogent in argument would soon impose upon diplomatists a

restraint that might transform international morals. The present secrecy, moreover, is only partial. But the mischief of the existing system of illicit revelation is that it is rarely honest. Diplomatists divulge secrets with a purpose and newspapers publish facts with a bias. But clearly it is not quite at every stage or in every detail that diplomacy could ever aim at publicity. The earlier phases of negotiation between nations, as between individuals, may gain by being confidential. Much may be effected in conversation by a tactful ambassador which could with difficulty be achieved by a public exchange of despatches. But even over the preliminary steps of negotiation Parliament ought to have a check. For it is precisely in these preliminaries that a Minister lays down the lines on which the subsequent fate of the transaction may depend.

The mechanism by which secrecy can at certain stages be preserved, and control none the less secured, has already been discovered in one form or another by several foreign Parliaments. The French Chamber has its Committee for Foreign Affairs, Austria and Hungary have their "Delegations." In Germany there is the Bundesrath, representing the Federal States, whose sanction is required for a declaration of war. But the most powerful of these models is the Foreign Affairs Committee of the United States Senate. Sitting in private, it discusses with the Secretary of State the details of his policy, and studies his treaties line by line before they can be ratified. Its record, unfortunately, is not encouraging. But a committee can be no better than the House from which it is chosen, and the Senate stands for organised commercial interests and for the sectional selfishness of individual States. It would not be reasonable to argue that a similar committee would develope the same faults under the very different conditions prevailing in this country.

The proposal which arises from these preliminary considerations shapes itself somewhat thus. There might be chosen from the House of Commons, either annually, or, better, for the duration of a Parliament, a small standing committee for the special consideration of foreign affairs. If the House could be induced to consider so drastic an innovation, the best method of selecting it would be by ballot on a proportional basis. It should be large enough to represent fairly every considerable phase of opinion, but not too large to make rapid and business-like procedure difficult. From seven to ten members would perhaps be the proper number. It ought to meet at frequent intervals both during the session and during the recess. It

should be summoned whenever a new situation demanded any departure from a policy previously sanctioned. It would be a mistake, I think, to attempt to invest it with considerable statutory powers of control. The unwritten understanding should be that it must be consulted on all important issues, and that every material document must be at its disposal. In general it would be regarded as a consultative Board. But certain specific rights it ought to have. On all the vital acts of diplomacy it is essential that it should have a power, if not of veto, at least of delay. These are, I take it, the ratification of all treaties, the arrangement of royal meetings of a public character, the recall of an ambassador, and the despatch of anything in the nature of an ultimatum. No Foreign Minister who respected himself would, with our nearly autocratic tradition behind him, consent to serve as the mere secretary of a Board. He must bear the full responsibility for his acts. To arm the Board with a general veto would be out of the question. But it must have in grave emergencies the right to impose a delay, and that right should be so defined as to make it possible for either party to any serious difference of opinion, the Minister or the majority of the Board, to take the sense of the whole House of Commons upon it. In practice that right would be rarely, if ever, exercised. It would usually be known in advance what view the House would be likely to take. As a rule, a Minister, realising that his Board might at some critical juncture pull him up and arrest the consummation of his policy, would be anxious to lead it, to keep it with him, and to gain its support against his critics. It would be useful that the Board should have the power to summon experts for consultation on special questions. The general idea of such a committee would be that it should exercise over the Foreign Office the control which the Cabinet so rarely uses to any purpose. It would be able to give to foreign affairs a close attention to which the busier Ministers cannot pretend. It would tend with experience to become expert. It would help to form statesmen. Its members in their debates would be able to argue without constantly thinking of the independence of their own departments, as Cabinet Ministers must often do. Nor would they in the privacy of a committee-room be fettered by the party ties which oppress the private member in the division-lobby. Three claims may be made for such a system as this. It would offer some guarantee that the policy of the Foreign Office really reflected the will of the nation.. It would place a check upon rash actions. It would help to secure, by the wisdom of many heads, a higher level of efficiency.

Certain objections inevitably present themselves. It will be said that secrecy could not be maintained. But such a Board, composed, say, of ten members, presents fewer risks than a Cabinet of twenty. A member who culpably violated the obligation of secrecy ought at once to be called on to resign. It will be said that to concede such power over a branch of the executive to a committee representing all parties would be a sharp departure from our system of government by majority. But the majority in the House would also have the majority on the committee. Moreover, we have in recent years discarded the principle of party government in foreign affairs, and substituted that of "continuity." It may also be urged that the existence of such a committee would destroy such control as the whole House possesses at present. To those who realise how little control it does in fact possess that will not seem a grave objection. The right to put questions and on occasion to raise debates would still remain. A more serious inconvenience would be that when these debates did take place the members of the committee would be unable to use freely their confidential knowledge. But it would lie largely with them to control the publication of documents. Before a debate it would be to their interest to insist that the House should be fully informed.

Such a scheme as this would certainly be opposed by both Front Benches, who would see in it a check to the power of the Cabinet, by all the forces which instinctively dislike an innovation, and finally, as Sir Charles Dilke has predicted, by the Crown, which alone exerts a real control at present. It will be possible to carry such a project only when the democracy realises the danger to which an uncontrolled foreign policy exposes it. That danger is sufficiently obvious to-day. We have become a factor in continental politics, linked to certain Powers and opposed to others. We have been publicly committed to the enormous task of maintaining a European balance of power. Our armaments register the dangers of the new departure; Europe is sharply divided into two camps, and we have taken our share in forming these camps. The more Imperialist of our statesmen are the first to admit the risks. Sir Edward Grey has told us that these rivalries may "submerge civilisation." Lord Rosebery has warned us that we are "rattling into barbarism." Nor is it certain that we have yet faced all the implications of the policy which has made us a continental Power, tied by understandings which are in effect alliances. A continental Power must have the continental arm, and already French opinion calls upon us to adopt conscription. If there is any virility in our

democracy, any foresight in our progressive parties, they will insist that over these fateful departures in our policy their representatives must exert some control. It is a truism that the growth of our armaments is the worst menace to social reform. It is a truism that armaments follow policy. It ought to be a maxim no less accepted that over the framing and the shaping of this policy Parliament should exert a control as rigid as it exercises over Budgets and Bills. It is impotent at present. It will remain impotent until it resolves to act through the organ of a Standing Committee.

Les intérêts de la Russie et les droits de la Finlande *

By Leo Mechelin
(Late Finnish Premier)

La crise actuelle dans les relations entre la Russie et la Finlande est le produit d'une agitation poussée par le parti réactionnaire en Russie. Ce parti qui, après la mort de l'empereur Alexandre II, a exercé une grande influence sur la politique intérieure de la Russie, a toujours été hostile envers la Finlande. La constitution de ce pays était aux yeux des réactionnaires russes une anomalie intolérable. Comment admettre, disaient-ils, que le pouvoir du Tsar, autocrate de la grande Russie, soit limité en Finlande par des lois fondamentales et par la Diète de ce petit pays ? Soit, que l'empereur Alexandre I, après avoir conquis la Finlande, en 1809, ait ratifié la constitution dont ce pays avait joui pendant qu'il était une partie du royaume de Suède ; soit, qu'il ait déclaré, lui-même, que c'était une ratification à perpétuité et que sa promesse ainsi donnée au peuple finlandais était irrévocable—l'erreur commise par ce monarque trop libéral devait être réparée. Et les réactionnaires-théoriciens, pour appuyer ces exigences, proclamaient la thèse que le pouvoir souverain des empereurs est antérieur et supérieur à toute loi.

La bureaucratie ne restait pas étrangère à ces idées. Il y avait les Pobedonostsev, les Pleve et d'autres, qui prirent pour tâche de les réaliser.

C'est au nom des " intérêts généraux de tout l'Empire " qu'on menait la campagne contre les droits de la Finlande.

La première grande victoire était le célèbre manifeste du 3/15 février 1899, qui menaçait de soustraire à la législation constitutionnelle de la Finlande toutes les questions de quelque importance, pour les soumettre à la législation autocratique de la Russie. Venait ensuite le décret de 1900, obligeant les institutions supérieures de l'administration finlandaise de se servir de

* This article was written in the middle of November. On November 17 the Finnish Diet rejected the Russian Government's demand for a military contribution of 31,000,000 marks. Next day the Diet was dissolved by a Ukase of the Tsar.

la langue russe au lieu des langues nationales du pays, le finnois et le suédois—décret impossible à remplir puisque la langue russe est très peu connue en Finlande où, parmi les trois millions d'habitants, il n y a que 7000 Russes. En 1901 la loi sur le service militaire de 1878 fut abolie par un décret dont le but était de russifier les jeunes citoyens finlandais en les forçant de servir dans des troupes russes. Par le même décret les troupes finlandaises qui s'étaient toujours distinguées par leur bonne instruction et leur bonne conduite, furent, presque toutes, licenciées. Le gouverneur général Bobrikoff, voyant qu'il était solidement soutenu à St. Pétersbourg, poursuivit ensuite avec une ardeur farouche sa noble tâche d'ébranler l'ordre légal dans le pays. Nombreux étaient les décrets qui, sur sa demande, furent édictés contrairement à la constitution.

Pareil régime ne pouvait pas durer. La résistance passive du peuple finlandais avait fait la garde autour des vraies lois, auxquelles les citoyens voulaient rester fidèles. En Russie, le peuple, las d'attendre les réformes qui ne venaient pas, manifesta son mécontentement. Le manifeste impérial du 17/30 octobre 1905 annonça au peuple russe l'introduction des principes constitutionnels—et le peuple finlandais reçut par le manifeste de son grand-duc du 4 novembre (22 octobre) 1905 l'assurance que l'ordre légal serait rétabli. Ce manifeste était d'autant plus rassurant qu'il abolit presque tous les décrets de la période Bobrikoff, et qu'il contint, en même temps, un programme de réformes importantes. C'était pour la Finlande l'aurore d'une nouvelle ère de travail fertil voué au progrès. Et bien des hommes de haute position en Russie constataient que le grand mal qu'on avait causé à la Finlande pendant les années 1899–1904 n'avait amené aucun avantage à la Russie.

Mais les groupes réactionnaires n'abandonnaient pas leur hostilité envers la Finlande. Vaincus par le manifeste du 4 Novembre 1905, ils forgeaient des plans de revanche. Certaines personnes, admirateurs de Bobrikoff et ennemis enragés de la Finlande, réussirent à gagner la confiance de M. Stolypin, qui ne connait pas la Finlande et qui, dans ses doubles fonctions de ministre de l'intérieur et de président du conseil des ministres, ne peut pas disposer du temps qu'il faudrait pour examiner, d'une manière approfondie, les questions finlandaises. Il est vrai qu'il n'y a que très peu d'affaires finlandaises qui touchent aux intérêts de la Russie et lesquelles, à cause de cela, doivent être examinées par les ministres russes avant d'être soumises à la décision du monarque. Mais ce terme " intérêts de la Russie," ou " intérêts généraux de tout l'empire," est d'une élasticité incroyable.

Les hommes de confiance de l'école de Bobrikoff, appelés à former un comité spécial pour les affaires finlandaises, ont exploité cette elasticité.

Depuis que l'ordonnance russe du 2 juin 1908—acte illégal, édicté à l'insu du Sénat de Finlande—a ouvert la porte à l'immixtion du conseil russe dans les affaires de Finlande, ce haut conseil examine et donne son avis sur tous les projets de lois finlandaises qui sont envoyés à St. Pétersbourg pour être soumis à l'empereur. C'est tout au plus une vingtième partie de ces projets qui touche de près ou de loin à quelques intérêts de la Russie. Mais le "comité spécial," admirable dans son zèle d'étendre la sphère d'action du conseil des ministres, écrit des mémoires innombrables sur les projets finlandais, et propose, si souvent que possible, qu'ils soient modifiés ou rejetés. Et ces mémoires, transformés en avis du conseil des ministres, ont toujours plus de chance que les projets du sénat de Finlande d'être approuvés par le monarque.

Cette immixtion dans les affaires finlandaises, gravement nuisible à la Finlande et d'aucune utilité pour la Russie, est d'autant plus blâmable qu'elle est absolument incompatible avec la constitution du Grand-duché d'après laquelle le pouvoir monarchique doit être exercé à l'aide de fonctionnaires finlandais.

Les Russes réactionnaires ou nationalistes accusent les Finlandais d'être trop entêtés ou intransigeants dans la défense de leurs droits. Ils prétendent même que nous élevons des prétentions qui dépassent nos droits légitimes et que nous ne voulons pas prendre en considération les intérêts du grand empire qui nous protège.

Quels sont donc les droits les plus importants qui appartiennent à la Finlande dans son union avec la Russie ? Ce sont les suivants :

La Finlande doit être gouvernée par son monarque d'après la constitution établie par les lois fondamentales du pays.

Le pouvoir législatif doit être exercé dans l'ordre statué par la constitution, c'est-à-dire qu'il faut le consentement de la Diète et la sanction du monarque pour toute loi qu n'est pas de la catégorie des ordonnances administratives, lesquelles sont édictées par le monarque seul.

Les fonctions judiciares et administratives ne peuvent pas être confiées à d'autres organes que ceux qui sont établis par les lois du pays, lesquelles déterminent la compétence et la responsabilité de ces organes.

La constitution ne peut subir aucune modification sans l'assentiment de la Diète, suivant l'ordre statué par la loi organique sur la Diète, une des lois fondamentales du pays. La constitution finlandaise ne s'étend pas aux questions relatives à la succession

au trône et a la maison impériale, ces questions étant réglées exclusivement par les lois de la Russie.

Ici se pose une autre question : Quels sont donc les droits de la Russie vis-à-vis de la Finlande, les droits acquis par la conquête vis-à-vis du pays conquis ?

Notons en premier lieu ceci : la Finlande se trouve sous le sceptre du monarque russe, celui qui monte au trône impérial de Russie est, *eo ipso*, en même temps grand-duc de Finlande.

A la Russie seule appartient la souveraineté vis-à-vis des puissances étrangères. La Finlande n'a pas une position indépendante dans les relations internationales. L'empereur dirige la politique étrangère à l'aide des organes de l'empire.

La suprématie de la Russie dans la politique étrangère a pour conséquence, aussi, que la Russie a le droit de diriger les mesures de défense sur le territoire finlandais. La législation finlandaise, d'ailleurs, a confirmé que les questions concernant le commandement et l'instruction des troupes finlandaises sont du ressort du ministre de la guerre de l'empire.

Nous arrivons à un troisième groupe de questions : Ne peut-il pas arriver que les droits ou les intérêts de la Russie se heurtent avec les droits et les intérêts de la Finlande ? Ces derniers, ne doivent-ils pas céder la place aux premiers s'ils ne peuvent pas être conciliés ? Ou y a-t-il des moyens pour maintenir toujours l'harmonie désirable dans les rapports mutuels des deux pays ?

Je tâcherai de répondre à ces questions très brièvement et surtout avec impartialité. Il est presqu'impossible que la législation finlandaise pourrait s'attaquer aux droits ou aux intérêts de la Russie, car aucune loi, adoptée par la Diète, ne parvient à la promulgation si elle n'est pas sanctionnée par le monarque, qui certainement refuserait la sanction, si la loi était contraire aux intérêts de son empire.

Or, il se peut qu'un projet de loi, soumis par le monarque à la délibération de la Diète et ayant pour but de favoriser des intérêts russes, est rejeté par la Diète. Ce rejet ne peut guère être un acte arbitraire ou de mauvaise volonté, la Diète en exposera les motifs sérieux qui exigent ou d'abandonner le projet ou de le refaire de manière qu'il puisse être approuvé. Les cas de cette nature ont été extrêmement rares.

Il s'agit quelquefois de régler les intérêts *mutuels* des deux pays, par exemple, les relations commerciales. En ces cas les négociations entre les deux gouvernements ont presque toujours abouti, et le résultat en a été la promulgation de lois identiques dans les deux pays. Des lois de cette nature doivent naturellement être basées sur le principe de réciprocité.

Jusqu'en 1899 les cas de conflit étaient tout a fait exception-

nels. Le manifeste du 3/15 février 1899 inaugura la politique qui veut superposer les intérêts de la Russie au droit de la Finlande d'être gouvernée d'après ses propres lois. Après la relâche qui nous fut donnée par le manifeste surnommé du 4 november 1905, nous nous trouvons de nouveau dans une période de conflits.

Nous avons dû constater qu'il règne encore, en Russie, une certaine confusion à l'égard des principes constitutionnels. Certains politiciens proclament la thèse que, puisque la Russie est devenue un pays constitutionnel, la Finlande n'a plus besoin de sa constitution particulière, elle peut vivre heureuse sous la constitution de l'empire. D'autres prétendent que la compétence législative de la Douma et du conseil de l'empire doit nécessairement s'étendre à la Finlande pour toutes les questions qui ne regardent pas exclusivement ce dernier pays; quoiqu'il est évident que les nouvelles lois fondamentales de 1906, en ce qui regarde la législation, ont limité le pouvoir de l'empereur mais pas du tout élargi le territoire de la législation russe, aux dépends de l'indépendance de la législation finlandaise. Il parait qu'après beaucoup de discussion, on est arrivé enfin à un programme suivant lequel la Diète de Finlande devrait envoyer quelques députés aux Chambres russes pour prendre part à leur délibérations quand il s'agit de lois qui doivent être appliquées non seulement en Russie mais aussi en Finlande. Ces lois formeraient donc une nouvelle espèce de "lois générales pour tout l'empire." Une commission composée de délégués des gouvernements russe et finlandais est chargée d'élaborer le projet de loi statutaire par laquelle cette "reforme" serait réalisée.

Ce qui nous a frappé pendant que cette question a été discutée à St. Pétersbourg, c'est que le prétendu besoin d'une législation générale, comprenant aussi la Finlande, n'a pas été prouvé par des faits. Le gouvernement russe n'a pas encore nommé les questions pour lesquelles une concentration législative chez le parlement russe serait nécessaire. M. Stolypin a proclamé, d'abord, l'idée qu'il ne faut pas fixer *a priori* les objets de la législation générale, les Chambres et le gouvernement de l'empire devraient avoir un pouvoir illimité à cet égard. On est peut-être revenu de cette idée trop vague, puisque la commission dont je viens de parler est chargée de découvrir et de proposer les catégories de questions qui, dans l'intérêt de tout l'empire, nécessiteraient la grande réforme.

Ce n'est pas sans inquiétude que nous attendons la solution de ce problème. Le courant réactionnaire qui prédomine actuellement à St. Pétersbourg ne permet pas d'espérer qu'on y reconnaîtra la nécessité légale de soumettre le projet dont il s'agit non seulement aux Chambres russes mais aussi à la Diète de

Finlande comme l'exige la constitution de ce pays. Si cela n'a pas lieu, ce serait, comme en 1899, un coup d'état—un conflit extrêmement pénible pour la Finlande.

Ce qui n'est pas de bon augure, c'est qu'un manifeste du 7 octobre, édicté sur les instances des ministres russes, a déjà arrêté que le service militaire des citoyens finlandais sera réglé par la "législation générale de tout l'empire." Pareille anticipation sur une organisation législative qui n'existe pas encore, est certainement quelque chose d'inouï et caractérise la manière d'agir de M. Stolypine en tout ce qui regarde la Finlande. Cet arrêt du 7 octobre, contraire au droit constitutionnel de la Finlande, est incompatible aussi avec les lois fondamentales russes qui ne permettent pas de régler par voie de décret des questions relatives à la compétence législative.

Un autre décret, révélant des tendances semblables, a statué que les chemins de fer de Finlande seront surveillés par des fonctionnaires du ministère des communications de l'empire dans le but d'assurer l'exécution des travaux qui seront nécessaires pour que les wagons russes, qui sont plus larges et plus lourds que les wagons finlandais, puissent circuler sur le réseau finlandais. Mesure illégale, car la constitution ne permet pas que des fonctionnaires non-finlandais soient chargés d'un contrôle quelquonque de notre administration. Mesure inutile, car si la Diète ouvre des crédits pour les travaux dont il s'agit, ces travaux seront consciencieusement exécutés sans aucune surveillance de la part de la Russie. Mesure anticipée, puisque on n'a pas encore commencé la construction du pont sur la Néva qui devra rendre possible de relier les lignes russes aux chemins de fer de Finlande.

La nervosité—je ne peux pas dire la sagesse—qui se manifeste dans de pareilles mesures, est certainement aussi la cause du renforcement des troupes russes qui se trouvent en garnison en Finlande. Le motif, publiquement avoué, de cet envoi de forces militaires est, qu'il faut être prêt à abattre la révolution qui se prépare ici. On présume donc, que la politique de lèse-droit et de tracasseries qu'on a suivie envers la Finlande depuis le printemps 1908, prennant pour prétexte "les intérêts de tout l'empire," provoquera des mouvements de révolte. On se trompe. Le peuple finlandais n'a pas perdu son sangfroid. Nous critiquons sévèrement et sans réserve cette mauvaise politique, mais le pays est tranquille, l'ordre public n'est pas troublé, il n'y a du désordre que dans les affaires sur lesquelles le conseil des ministres de l'empire a mis sa main. Nous continuons à travailler pour le bien de notre patrie, malgré les difficultés auxquelles ce travail est exposé depuis que les hommes puissants, à St. Pétersbourg, paralysent l'activité du gouvernement finlandais.

The Rights of Finland at Stake

By Professor J. N. Reuter

I

"MIGHT cannot dominate Right in Russia," said M. Stolypin, Russian Minister of the Interior and President of the Council of Ministers, in the speech which he delivered in the Duma on May 18, 1908, when pressed by the various parties to declare his policy with regard to Finland. This noble sentiment has the familiar ring of Russian officialdom. It may, perhaps, be worth while to consider it in the light of recent history and present-day issues.

Alexander I., the first Russian sovereign of Finland, addressed a Rescript to Count Steinheil on his appointment to the post of Governor-General. Therein he wrote, "My object in Finland has been to give the people a political existence so that they shall not regard themselves as subject to Russia, but as attached to her by their own obvious interests." It is not the place here to give an historical account of subsequent events. It may, however, be briefly stated that the political ideal expressed in the words quoted here was at times forgotten, but was again revived, and, in such times, even resulted in the extension of Finland's constitutional rights. Then again, this ideal was abandoned, and gave way to a totally different one, which found its most acute expression in February 1899, when the Tsar, a year after the issue of his invitations to the first Peace Conference at The Hague, suppressed by Imperial Manifesto the constitutional right of Finland. The arbitrary and corrupt Russian bureaucratic *régime* little by little forced its way into the country, whilst Finlanders watched with bitter resentment the suppression, one by one, of their most cherished national institutions.

This Manifesto was condemned in many European countries at the time, and a protest against it was signed by over a thousand prominent publicists and constitutional lawyers, who presented an international address to the Tsar begging him to restore the rights of the Grand Duchy. Amongst British signatures there

were those of Lord Lister, Sir Clements Markham, Herbert Spencer, George Meredith, Thomas Hardy, Lord Courtney, Professor Westlake and a great number of other professors of constitutional and international law at the English and Scottish Universities.

In 1905, however, it seemed at last that a new era was about to dawn. The change was brought about by the domestic crisis through which Russia herself was then passing. An Imperial Manifesto promulgated in October, containing the principles of a constitutional form of government in Russia, was followed as an inevitable sequel by the Manifesto of November 4, which practically restored to Finland its full political rights. In 1906, a new Law of the Diet was enacted ; the Finnish Diet now consists of a single Chamber instead of four Houses (Estates) as formerly. Instead of triennial sessions of the Estates, annual sessions of the Diet were introduced, whilst an extension of the franchise to every citizen over twenty-four years of age without distinction of sex gave to women active electoral rights. Moreover, the door was opened to new and far-reaching reforms, the fulfilment of which has infused fresh life into the democratic spirit of Finnish national institutions. Whilst, however, so much has been done to improve the political, social, and economic condition of the country many of the promises which were then made have not been fulfilled. The principal reason for this failure to redeem their pledges lies in a change of attitude amongst Russian officials and their interference in Finnish affairs. It is by consideration of this change and of its effect upon Finland that we may best judge how much truth there is in M. Stolypin's claim that in Russia " might cannot dominate right."

Ominous signs of a reversal of policy had appeared before, but the first official expression to it was given in the speech of M. Stolypin already referred to. In this speech he claimed for Russia as the sovereign power the right of control over Finnish administration and legislation whenever the interests of the Empire were concerned. This claim meant practically the restoration of the old Bobrikoff *régime* and was based on the same ideas as those underlying the February Manifesto of 1899. M. Stolypin attempts to justify his attitude by arguing that the constitutional relations between Russia and Finland are determined only by Clause 4 of the Treaty of Peace between Russia and Sweden, dated September 17, 1809. This clause runs as follows :

" His Majesty the King of Sweden renounces irrevocably and for ever, on behalf of himself as well as on behalf of his

successors to the Swedish Throne and Realm, and in favour of His Majesty the Emperor of Russia and his successors to the Russian Throne and Empire, all his rights and titles of the governments enumerated hereafter which have been conquered by the arms of His Imperial Majesty from the Swedish Army to wit : the Provinces of Kymmenegard, &c. &c.

"These Provinces, with all their inhabitants, Towns, Ports, Forts, Villages, and Islands, with their appurtenances, privileges and revenues, shall hereafter under full ownership and sovereignty belong to the Russian Empire and be incorporated with the same."

After quoting this clause M. Stolypin exclaimed, "This is the act, the title by which Russia possesses Finland, the one and only act which determines the mutual relations between Russia and Finland."

Now this clause contains no reference whatever to the autonomy of the Grand Duchy, and if it were the only act by which the mutual relations of Russia and Finland were determined, then Finland would have no Constitution. The political autonomy of Finland, which has been recognised for exactly one hundred years, would have been without legal foundation. Even M. Stolypin admits that Finland enjoys autonomy. "There must be no room for the suspicion," he said, "that Russia would violate the rights of autonomy conferred on Finland by the monarch." On what, then, does the claim to Finnish autonomy rest and how was it conferred? Clause 6 of the Treaty of Peace contains the following passage :

"His Majesty the Emperor of all the Russias, having already given the most manifest proofs of the clemency and justice with which he has resolved to govern the inhabitants of the provinces which he has acquired, by generosity and by his own spontaneous act assuring to them the free exercise of their religion, rights, property, and privileges, His Swedish Majesty considers himself thereby released from performing the otherwise sacred duty of making reservations in the above respects in favour of his former subjects."

This entry in the Treaty of Peace refers to the settlement made at the Borgo Diet a few months earlier, and it is under this settlement, confirmed by deeds of a later date, that Finland claims her right of autonomy. M. Stolypin recognises the claim of Finland to autonomy but refuses to recognise the binding force of the acts of the Borgo Diet on which alone it can legally be based. This claim gives Finland no voice in her external relations. All international treaties, including matters relating to the conduct of war (though laws on the liability of Finnish citizens to military

service fall under the competency of the Finnish Diet), are matters common to Russia and Finland as one Empire, one international unit, and are dealt with by the proper Russian authorities. This is admitted by all Finlanders. But M. Stolypin seeks to extend Russian authority by making it paramount in all matters which have a bearing on Russian or Imperial interests. But the Constitution of Finland which she has in fact enjoyed, and to which she is legally entitled, makes no exception in favour of matters that may concern the interests of Russia. It is clear, therefore, that M. Stolypin, in trying to reconcile his interpretation of the constitutional issue with a serious curtailment of Finnish autonomy, takes refuge in an interpretation of the title-deeds in regard to this autonomy, which leads to an absurdity. If he recognises, as he does, the Finnish claim to autonomy, he must also recognise the validity of the documents on which it rests and must accept the definition of autonomy therein laid down.

II

The attempt to curtail Finnish constitutional liberty has taken different forms. Early in 1908 the Russian Council of Ministers, over which M. Stolypin presides, drew up a "Journal" or Protocol, to which the Tsar on June 2 gave his sanction. The chief provisions of this Protocol were briefly as follows: All legislative proposals and all administrative matters "of general importance," before being brought to the Sovereign for his sanction, or, as is the case with Bills to be presented to the Diet, for his preliminary approval, as well as all reports drawn up by Finnish authorities for the Tsar's inspection, must be communicated to the Russian Council of Ministers. The Council will then decide "which matters concerning the Grand Duchy of Finland also have a bearing on the interests of the Empire, and, consequently, call for a fuller examination on the part of the Ministries and Government Boards." If the Council decide that a matter has a bearing on the interests of the Empire the Council prepare a report on it, and, should the Council differ from the views taken up by the Finnish authorities, the Finnish Secretary of State, who alone should be the constitutional channel for bringing Finnish matters before the Sovereign's notice, can do so only in the presence of the President of the Council of Ministers or another Russian Minister. But in practice it has frequently happened that the Council send in their report beforehand, and the Tsar's decision is practically taken when the Finnish Secretary is permitted an audience.

This important measure was brought about by the exclusive recommendation of Russian Ministers. Neither the Finnish Diet nor the Senate nor the Secretary of State for Finland, who resides in St. Petersburg, was consulted or had the slightest idea of what was going on before the Protocol was published in Russia. It has never been promulgated in Finland and no Finnish authority has been officially advised of it. The whole matter has been treated as a private affair between the Tsar and his Russian Ministers.

The excuse has been made that the Tsar must be permitted to seek counsel with whomsoever he chooses in regard to the government of Finland. But this is not a question of privately consulting one man or the other. The new measure amounts to an official recognition of the Russian Council of Ministers as an organ of government exercising a powerful control over Finnish legislation, administration and finance. This is in conflict with the fundamental principle of the Finnish Constitution, that the government of the country shall be carried on with the assistance of native authorities only, and more particularly is it in conflict with the authority of the Finnish Senate. In a Manifesto of 1816 Alexander I. said: "We . . . not only confirmed in the most solemn fashion the Constitution and the laws, together with the liberties and the rights of every Finnish citizen arising therefrom, but also, after due consideration together with the assembled Estates of the country, We decreed a special government, composed of Finnish men, under the name of the Government Council, which has till now carried in Our name the civil administration of the country, acting also as the final Court of Appeal, independently of every power but that of the laws, including those powers which We, as Ruler, exercise in conformity with the same." The Manifesto then confers on the Government Council, "in order to point out more markedly its immediate relation to Our person," "the name of Our Senate for Finland, without change, however, in its present organisation, and still less in the Constitution and Laws by Us ratified for Finland, which We in all points hereby further confirm."

It is abundantly clear that the Protocol of June 2 does not permit the Senate to carry on the administration of the country in the Sovereign's name "independently of every power but that of the laws." The centre of gravity of Finnish administration has, in fact, been shifted from the Senate for Finland, composed of Finnish men, to the Russian Council of Ministers.

The Finnish Senate protested to the Tsar in three separate Memoranda, dated respectively June 19, 1908, December 22,

1908, and February 25, 1909. The Finnish Diet adopted on October 13, 1908, a petition to the Tsar to reconsider the matter. On the occasion of the opening of the Diet's next session the Speaker, in his reply to the Tsar's Message, briefly referred to the anxiety prevailing in Finland, with the result that the Diet was immediately punished by an order of dissolution from the Tsar. The Senate's Memoranda, as well as the Diet's Petition were rejected, the Tsar acting on the exclusive recommendation of the Russian Council of Ministers. They were not even brought before him through the constitutional channels, the Finnish Secretary of State having been refused a hearing. As a result all members of the Department of Justice, or half the number of the Senators, resigned.

In the same year another but less successful attack was made on the Finnish Constitution. In the autumn of 1908 the Finnish Diet adopted a new Landlord and Tenant Bill, but before it was brought up for the Tsar's sanction the Diet was dissolved in the manner just described. The Bill being of a pressing nature the Council of Ministers was at last prevailed upon to report on it to the Tsar. The latter then gave his sanction to it, but, on the recommendation of the Council, added a rider in the preamble. This was to the effect that, though the Bill, having been adopted by a Diet which was dissolved before the expiration of the three years' period for which it was elected, should not have been presented for his consideration at all, the Tsar would nevertheless make an exception from the rule and sanction it, prompted by his regard for the welfare for the poorer part of the population.

The Senate decided to postpone promulgation of this law in view of the constitutional doctrine involved in the preamble. It was pointed out that this doctrine was entirely foreign to Finnish law. The preamble which, according to custom, should have contained nothing beyond the formal sanction to the law in question, embodied an interpretation of constitutional law. Such an interpretation could only legally be made in the same manner as the enactment of a constitutional law, *i.e.*, through the concurrent decision of the Sovereign and the Diet. The Senate, therefore, petitioned the Tsar to modify the preamble in such a way as to remove from it what could be construed as an interpretation of constitutional law.

In reply, the Tsar reprimanded the Senate for delaying promulgation, recommended it to do so immediately, but promised later on to take the representations made by the Senate into his consideration. Five of the Senators then voted against, whilst the Governor-General and five others voted for promulgation

of the law. The minority then tendered their resignations. The inconveniences resulting from this new constitutional doctrine proved, however, of so serious a practical nature that the Tsar eventually, in July this year, issued a declaration that "the gracious expressions in the preamble to the Landlord and Tenant Law concerning the invalidity of the decisions of a dissolved Diet do not constitute an interpretation of the constitutional law and shall not in the future be binding in law."

A third and most important encroachment by the Russian Council of Ministers on the autonomy of Finland was also carried out at the instigation of M. Stolypin. The Finnish Constitution makes no distinction between matters that may have, or may not have, a bearing on the interests of Russia. At the same time Russian interests have never been disregarded in Finnish legislation. It had been the practice, when a legislative proposal was brought forward in Finland, and a Russian interest might be affected by it, to communicate with the Russian Minister whom the matter most closely concerned, in order that he might make his observations. This practice was confirmed by law in 1891. In its Memoranda of 1908 and 1909, on the interference of the Russian Council of Ministers in Finnish affairs, the Senate suggested that, in case the procedure under the Ordinance of 1891 were not satisfactory, a committee of Russian and Finnish members should be appointed to discuss a *modus procedendi* of such a nature that the Constitution of Finland should not be violated. On the recommendation of the Council of Ministers, the Tsar rejected these suggestions, but the Council of Ministers took the matter in hand and summoned a "Special Conference," consisting of several Russian Ministers, other high Russian functionaries, the Governor-General of Finland, who is also a Russian, with M. Stolypin as President. Their business was to draw up a programme for a joint committee to be appointed "for the drafting of proposals for regulations concerning the procedure of issuing laws of general Imperial interest concerning Finland." This Conference accordingly drew up a programme, approved by the Tsar on April 10, 1909, in which it was resolved that the joint committee should suggest a definition of the term "laws of general Imperial interest concerning Finland." These laws, it was proposed, should be totally withdrawn from the competency of the Finnish Diet and should be passed by the legislative bodies of Russia, that is, the Council of State and the Duma. The only safeguard for the interests of Finland suggested in the programme is that a representative for Finland should be admitted to these two bodies

when Finnish questions were discussed there. The joint committee appointed according to the programme consists of M. Haritonoff, Controller of the Empire, as chairman, and five other Russian members, including such notorious opponents of Finnish autonomy as M. Deutrich, who was Assistant-Governor of Finland under Bobrikoff, and General Borodkin. Its first sitting was held on June 29, 1909.

It is impossible to say what laws concerning Finland will be defined as being of "general interest." Having regard, however, to the wide interpretation which Russian reactionaries are wont to put on the expression, there is every reason to suppose that the Russian members of the committee will insist on its extension so as to include every important category of law.

The Finnish members through their spokesman, Archbishop Johansson, declared that they proceeded to work on the committee on the assumption that in case alterations in the law of Finland should be found necessary, having regard to Imperial interests, such alterations should be made through modifications in the constitutional laws of Finland. The Finlanders are prepared to do their duty by the Empire but, the Archbishop said, "sacrifices have been demanded from us to which no people can consent. The Finnish people cannot forego their Constitution, which is a gift of the Most High, and which, next to the Gospel, is their most cherished possession."

M. Deutrich, who spoke on behalf of the Russian members, explained that any law resulting from the labours of the committee would not be submitted to the ratification of the Finnish Diet.

So M. Stolypin's way is now clear. A very serious curtailment of the constitutional right of the Finnish legislature is imminent. The sanction of the people will not be required. The Finlanders have practically no other help than that given by a consciousness of the justice of their cause. They have no appeal. Yet M. Stolypin's avowed object is that contemplated by the notorious Manifesto of February 1899, a document which displayed a complete disregard of constitutional right and which was stigmatised by the highest European authorities as no better than a *coup d'état*. Events will too soon clearly show how much truth there was in M. Stolypin's boast that "in Russia might cannot dominate right."

The Place of Satire in Education

By Foster Watson

In that fascinating work of the late Mark Pattison—*The Life of Isaac Casaubon*—perhaps the most wonderful biography of the Victorian era—the attitude of the orthodox party towards classical studies in the first half of the sixteenth century—in the time of Erasmus—is described as "one of pure antipathy." Mr. Mark Pattison proceeds: "This phase of hostility to the 'new learning,' under pretence of reverence for the old, has been handed down to us by the broad and exaggerated satire of the *Epistolæ Obscurorum Virorum*." We are perfectly familiar with the attitude of orthodoxy in the controversies of the last century. When Lyall pointed out the scientific proofs of the antiquity of man—extending to scores of thousands, perhaps to an incalculably greater number of years, of man on the face of the earth; when Charles Darwin planked down the evidence for the origin of man—as the climax to the origin of species—and showed the bearing of biological evolution on the human race, the answer of orthodoxy was that such researches were profane, that the scientific investigators were blasphemers, that the whole structure of Biblical studies was undermined, that Christian faith was impugned, and that science was at least the antechamber of atheism. Yet the steady progress of undaunted search for the truth of matters has tended to establish the recognition of the patient heroic labours of these men, and the Churches to-day accept the researches and results of the scientists and adopt the safer attitude of interpretation of the old theological doctrines in the light of the newer scientific results. The permeation of the results of profound and long-continued research in any of the departments of study to-day into the general consciousness of other students is infinitely more rapid and certain than it was four hundred years ago. Yet we know how much had to be done by the incisiveness and sarcasm of a T. H. Huxley,

* *Epistolæ Obscurorum Virorum: The Latin text. With an English Rendering, Notes, and an Historical Introduction by Francis Griffin Stokes.* (London: Chatto and Windus. 1909.)

and a Herbert Spencer to gain the position now won for the results of the researches of men like Lyall, Darwin, and Wallace. The question, indeed, was raised by Mark Pattison in *The Life of Casaubon :* "Why is it that the modern man of science stands on a higher level, moral and intellectual, than the modern man of letters ?" The answer which Mr. Pattison gives is this : "It is not owing to any superior value in the object of knowledge, but because the physicist is penetrated by the spirit of *thorough research* from which our literature is entirely divorced."

Without stopping to discuss the particular problem raised by Mr. Pattison, we are disposed to accept his explanation and to accept it in even a more general form. We may say that probably all great changes in the progress of culture are changes of attitude rather than changes in the quantitative side of knowledge. Or perhaps it is more accurate to put it that the changes in the form and matter of knowledge, however great they may be at any epoch, realise themselves most actively in some new conception which emerges with directive force out of the new knowledge-masses. Thus, in the time of the Renascence, in the first period of the revival of classical learning, say from 1400 to 1550, there came the revival of research into Latin and Greek authors. Amid all the works brought to light, and the outburst of thought and labour bestowed on them—the new world of the old classical Latin works—which had slumbered in oblivion during the Middle Ages, all breathed in the new atmosphere of Rhetoric—all inspired the students to imitation. A new world of beauty of form in literature came to light. The followers of the old methods of scholasticism, which involved the circling round and round in logical mazes of incredible intricacy, only emerging, now and again, into authoritative dogma of the Church founded on Aristotelean *dicta*, regarded this new classical learning as contraband, inane, nay, as blasphemous.

The fact is that, speaking generally, paradoxical as it may seem, in any age of the world's history, the present or the past, the number of keen, earnest, devoted lovers of truth is always relatively small. Hence the line of advance in any epoch is always blocked up by those who are prejudiced in favour of the old, the accustomed, the traditional, the conventional.

In the time of the Renascence, the old long-stagnant waters of scholasticism could not receive the salutary flush of the New Learning without such drastic action as involved real and all-pervading disturbance. The light of the New Learning of classicism was, to use the Platonic metaphor, dazzling, blinding, to those (and they were the vast unwieldy mass of the mediæval

ecclesiastics) who had been living underground in the subterranean cave of scholastic Aristoteleanism. They regarded the new knowledge—the new studies, the new researches, the new enthusiasm for the classical writers, and the imitation of them in prose and verse writing—as suspect, as mere travellers' tales. Their attitude to the New Learning was one of pure antipathy.

How, then, was it possible to win a hearing, and still more an acceptance, for the New Learning ?

There were, perhaps, a number of methods that might have been adopted. But the one which proved the most effective, the method of the *Epistolæ Obscurorum Virorum*, was the method of Education by Satire, and perhaps it may be said that in some respects no book has ever accomplished more in paving the way for the progress of culture, by a negative method, than this remarkable Satire. This book was not the first of that era to attempt the education of the age by satire. In 1509, Erasmus wrote the well-known *Praise of Folly*, the *Moriæ Encomium*. This book was thought out, we are told by Erasmus, when he was on the journey from Italy to England, and was actually put into writing in the house of Sir Thomas More. The title was given to the book in honour of Sir Thomas More, a pun being made on his name as recalling the Greek word for folly, Μωρία. Erasmus explains the humour by the neat suggestion that Sir Thomas More was "as far from the thing as his name was near it." Folly is made attractive by her self-praise. She was born in the Fortunate Islands, where all things grow without the toil of husbandry. She poses as a benefactress. Equipped with cap and bells she permeates every class of society, and is at home with every occupation. All the honoured institutions and professions of the time are claimed by Folly as her own, and in this way Erasmus strikes home his cutting gibes at the grammarians, theologians, and philosophers of the mediæval type. He thus attacks friars, princes, clerics, and scholastics, showing that they are devotees of Folly. The objection was urged that Erasmus confounded good things and bad ; good men and bad ; and that his tone was flippant. Certainly Erasmus was laughing at the exploits of Folly, her respectability, her ubiquity. How far the laugh went, where the seriousness came in, was for the readers to discover. The book therefore attracted extraordinary interest, and, with Holbein's cuts added, became almost a classic for its direct attack on orthodox mediævalism, as it presented its determined rally against the New Learning. Its popularity was unprecedented. Between 1509 and 1536, Professor Emerton has

enumerated forty-three editions—and this, it must be remembered, in an age so close upon the introduction of the art of printing.

Interesting as the *Moriæ Encomium* is to us, as having been produced on English soil, it is only just to say that the *Epistolæ Obscurorum Virorum* is, in some ways, even more remarkable.

It is true that Erasmus wields a mighty hammer that crushes the pretensions of the mediæval obscurantists. But this he does with direct force, using his instrument of destruction with all the strength of a practised craftsman. But the *Epistolæ Obscurorum Virorum* is more clever in that it praises the orthodox mediævalists of the early sixteenth century, with a *naïveté* so subtle and insidious, though withal blatant, that the easily duped conceited men in many quarters egotistically accepted the praise as their rightful due, and the *Epistolæ* was at first regarded as the defence of the old scholasticism, and an attack on the New Learning, until reading between the lines it was discovered that the enemy had entered right into the scholastic camp and taken possession of all their mental equipment and baggage; and whilst making an inventory—in which every article was held up to a lingering pæan of fondness and delight—the apparently friendly writer or writers had left in real possession their own infinitely larger, stronger, varied camp of the New Learning with its brilliant scholars, its refurbished weapons, its constantly accumulating equipment, its hope for the future.

There was not a corner of the scholastic stronghold unknown, unhonoured, unsung. And what was more, the *Epistolæ Obscurorum Virorum* pointed out the very arguments to be used against the upholders of the New Learning, and even supplied ready-made interpretation against them. The book showed a complete command of the situation. Both sides of the controversy were thoroughly well known. The strength of the scholastic position was just as grossly over-estimated as even the egotistic conceit of orthodoxy could stand, whilst the abuse and calumny of the supporters of the New Learning were tempered with easy concessions of unimportant appreciation. The *Epistolæ* showed great psychological insight. The letters which were invented appeared to give the sincere expression of opinions of the obscurantists on every conceivable topic, and with regard to all the persons of the literary movement a little exaggerated, so that the wayfaring man might see what manner of men the orthodox were, their follies, their immoralities, their bombastic conceit, their futile controversies, their intolerable vanity, their cruel callousness, their absolute hatred of change for the better, not to mention their disgraceful laziness, dissoluteness, and

selfishness—and all this often under the apparent cover of satisfaction and praise—and always with the conventional justifications for any slacknesses laid down exultantly in black and white.

The method of the *Epistolæ*, therefore, was that of Education of the public, by giving supposed letters *verbatim* of the established orthodox scholastics to one another, in which they expose their own cynicism and stagnant conservatism with the utmost frankness and with mutual pats on the back. But all this is so skilfully done that it actually misled the scholastics themselves into thinking it was all done by a friend for their amusement and self-gratulation, until it stole in upon others that the enemies of orthodox scholasticism had done this thing. Strong as had been Erasmus's attack, that of the *Epistolæ* was vastly more effective. For the latter was so psychologically clever that it presented to the public, not only the shallow foundations of the reputation of the academic and ecclesiastical pillars of the old mediævalistic survivals, and their frequent depths of profanity and immorality, but their own almost incredible delight in what Milton afterwards called "that asinine feast of sow-thistles and brambles," *i.e.*, the old grammatical and logical Disputations.

It was, in short, a supreme example of education by Satire. The change from the old to the new was pushed forward by making the followers of the old, unconsciously as it were, reveal it as ridiculous to the eyes of every one except their own.

The *Epistolæ* were first issued in 1515. The individual letters are written by men with names, plausible enough for the times, of supposed confirmed scholastics. The names are of slight interest for us, but we may instance such as Langschneider, Pelzer, Federleser, Ziegenmelker, Gänseprediger, Conrad of Zwickau, Finstermacher, Glatzkopf, Wickelträger, Schnarholtz. These "obscurists," * as we may well call them, write their letters to a leading theological professor at Cologne, Ortwin Gratius, who had proceeded from the well-known school of Deventer, who is described in one place as "uprooter of tares, that is, quarterer of traitors, scourger of forgers and slanderers, incinerator of heretics and much besides." The men of the New Learning or the Humanists were distinguished by their desire to be "poets" both as actual imitators of the classical poets, and also as being enthusiastic exponents of the

* As Mr. Stokes points out, the meaning of *obscuri viri* is just, literally, obscure men, as opposed to the *clari viri*, the distinguished men who had praised Reuchlin. But the writers themselves of the *Epistolæ Obscurorum Virorum* so played with ambiguities that they would smile (one would think) if we mistake now and again *obscuri* for "obscurists" or "obscurantists."

ancient poets. They further desired to acquaint themselves with the new studies in Greek. This was bad enough for the mediæval Aristotelean "grammarians," who had graduated Magister in Artibus without such impedimenta. But the anger and contempt which especially possessed the obscurantists were wreaked on the new "fad" of the Humanists, viz., the study of Hebrew, actually proposed by the first great European Hebraist of those days, Johann Reuchlin (1455–1522). Over this question of Hebrew studies as a developement of classical studies raged a fierce controversy. In the words of Sir William Hamilton:* "The cause of Reuchlin became the cause of letters; Europe was divided into two hostile parties; the powers of light stood marshalled against the powers of darkness. So decisive was this struggle regarded for the interests of literature that the friends of illumination saw in its unexpected issue the special providence of God; and so immediate were its consequences in preparing the religious reformation that Luther acknowledges to Reuchlin that he only followed in his steps—only consummated his victory in breaking the teeth of the Behemoth." It must now be mentioned that in 1514 there was issued a book bearing the title *Clarorum Virorum Epistolæ*, which consisted of a collection of Latin, Greek, and Hebrew letters sent to Reuchlin approving of his energy and enthusiasm in spreading the study of letters. As Reuchlin published these to help the new movement, Ortwin is supposed to publish the *Epistolæ Obscurorum Virorum* as a counter-move the next year. The "obscure" men are so dubbed in mock modesty. Reuchlin, the great Humanist, who combined the ripest knowledge of the times in law, theology, and the classics, as well as being the pioneer of Orientalists, naturally had a great desire to be friendly with Jews, from whose rabbis he had learned so much. Reuchlin urged the establishment of classes of Hebrew in the Universities. A converted Jew, by name Johann Pfefferkorn, argued that all Hebrew writings except the Bible were so opposed to Christianity that they ought to be destroyed, and issued a pamphlet—called *Handt Spiegel*, *i.e.*, hand-glass or mirror—in which he ferociously attacked Reuchlin, as spreading the blasphemies of the Jews. Reuchlin wrote an indiscreet defence. It is in these and other more complicated events that the letters of the "obscure" men find their subject-matter. The letters introduce copious examples of "scholastic grossness," of "grammatic flats and shallows," and as Milton would put it further, their "unballasted wits were turmoiled in fathomless and unquiet deeps of

* *Discussions on Philosophy and Literature*, p. 216.

controversy," and everywhere they are "deluded with ragged notions and babblements," and indeed, as we have hinted, with worse, for the coarseness and slovenliness of thought were parts of the mental equipment which could not fail to be emphasised by those who attempted the method of Satire, nor could it be forgotten to introduce the letter-writers and their crew as glorying in the filth and wantonness which had become so customary that the full description of their tone of mind brought no suspicion of disgrace in seeing images of themselves.

One or two quotations will show the method of the book. Let us take a crucial topic, the subject of Greek. In Book II., letter 44, Peter of Worms writes to Ortwin Gratius from Rome:

"Receive, with this letter, a new book which has been printed here. I trow indeed, seeing that you are a poet, you will learn from it for the perfecting of your art. For I heard, at a session of the Court here, that this book is the well-spring of poetry, and that its author, one Homer, is the father of all the poets. He told me, moreover, that there is another Homer, in Greek. 'Nay,' quoth I, 'what care I about Greek? The Latin one is better, for I want it to send to Germany to Master Ortwin, who pays no heed to these Greek fantasticalities.'"

Or, let us turn to an account of the accents in Greek.

Nikolaus Ziegenmelker, Bachelor, writes to Magister Ortwin Gratius: "There is a certain Grecian here who readeth in Urban's Grammar, and whenever he writeth Greek he always putteth tittles a-top. Thereupon, I said, a little while ago, 'Magister Ortwin of Deventor also handleth Greek Grammar, and he is as well qualified therein as that fellow, and yet he never maketh tittles so: and I trow he knoweth his business as well as that Grecian—ay, and can put him to rights!' Nevertheless, some distrusted me in this matter, wherefore my friends and fellow-students brought me to write to your worthiness so that you might make it known to me whether we ought to put tittles or no. And if we ought not to put them, then, by the Lord, we will roundly harry that Grecian, and bring it to pass that his hearers shall be but few! Of a truth I took note of you at Cologne in Henry Quentell's house, when you were press-reader, and had to correct Greek, that you would strike out all the tittles that were above the letters and say, 'Of what use are these fiddle-faddles?' and it hath just come into my mind that you must have had some ground for this, or you would not have done it." *

Much more might be said about the *Epistolæ Obscurorum Virorum*, of the dog-Latin which occurs appropriately enough for the interlocutors, of the sense of humour, of the miscellaneous topics which give an insight into details of the life of the time, of its characterisation, although it adopts the epistolary form rather than that of the colloquy. Nor would it be lacking in interest to discuss Professor Saintsbury's suggestion that in it we find "access to the as yet all but undiscovered and very rarely utilised stores of the matter and means of novel and drama." But the aspect which we have chosen to present is the educative virtue of Satire, as seen in the *Epistolæ*. Of the

* The quotations are taken from Mr. Stokes's translation.

awakening power of the book, negatively, to the intuition of the shallowness of the old; positively, to the fascination of the New Learning—there is the unanimous testimony of all who have studied the times. In what did that educative aspect consist? I think we get the answer: In pointing out difference of attitude; the difference—to go back to Mr. Pattison's suggestion—of *thoroughness of research*. The Humanists cared for even the Greek accents; the scholastics regarded such matters as "fiddle-faddles." The obscurantists knew that there was a Homer (translated) in Latin; and that there is "another Homer in Greek." But the Humanists knew Homer himself, and *knew him in the Greek*. The academic world was largely educated by this epoch-making Satire to consider the difference between the two attitudes, and to make its choice.

For those who wish to have the whole scene live again of this remarkable episode in the world-changing age of the early German Renascence, the first English translation of the *Epistolæ Obscurorum Virorum* of Mr. F. G. Stokes is now available, in an edition which is limited to 500 copies. It is a handsome book, worthily produced. It contains the Latin text as well as the English translation. It has an Introduction of 73 pages, a preface of 12 pages, and an excellent Index—needless to say, an invaluable accompaniment to such a work. The Introduction gives an account of the times and the controversies, a discussion of the date, the authors, and the historical significance and effects of the book. It would have been interesting to discuss points of agreement and difference with the author's views, and to offer criticisms. But we have preferred to point out at length the educational issues of the *Epistolæ Obscurorum Virorum* itself. As to the work done by Mr. Stokes, we content ourselves by offering congratulations on the result of what has clearly involved heavy and thorough labour, insight, and devotedness—and we will only add that with one reader at least it is not thankless—for it is a joy to have an important historical document in the original Latin and in a translation marked by the artistic impulse to give the archaisms which may correspond to what has been called its "canistic" Latinity, and to find another book worked out by an Englishman for Englishmen, providing our countrymen with an opportunity to take up again the interest in the Renascence European current, which they possessed so conspicuously four hundred years ago, when Sir Thomas More, Fisher, Linacre, Grocyn, Colet, Latimer, and Tunstall kept their eyes open for all that concerned the great cause wrapt up in the name of Reuchlin. A welcome, then, to Mr. Stokes's book!

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Wedges. By C. B. Wheeler. viii + 254 : 7½ × 5 in. Gay and Hancock, Ltd. 2*s.* 6*d.* net.

Harmless and rather pleasant essays reprinted from *Broad Views*, the *Nineteenth Century*, the *Hibbert Journal*, the *Westminster Review* and other periodicals. Without any very strikingly new ideas to present to us, the author writes on scepticism, on the bonds of matrimony, on party government, on divorce and upon other matters to which the ordinary man should, though as a rule he does not, devote some attention.

"The following essays were written with the innocent—possibly laudable—object of finding out what I thought on certain points. There is nothing like writing for one who wishes to tidy up his mind and find his mental or moral bearings. . . . Having found out what I thought—sometimes with a mild degree of astonishment—it occurred to me that by publishing the results of my own introspection I might save some other people the trouble of going through the same process. For every one is not enamoured of tidying, or parlour-maids would be at a discount."

A History of Story-telling. By Arthur Ransome. xviii + 312 : 9 × 6. 27 Portraits. Index. T. C. and E. C. Jack. 10*s.* 6*d.* net.

Mr. Ransome's book is much more a history of story-tellers than of story-telling. It deals, that is to say, rather with the moods of authors than with their methods. Nevertheless, since it does deal to some extent with their methods we can accord it a hearty welcome. The book is somewhat loosely arranged; it skips about from Balzac and Gautier to Poe and Hawthorne, and this is somewhat trying, since it destroys or at least disturbs all continuity of thought. Nevertheless, as we have said, we welcome Mr. Ransome's book because, in a country where literary criticism consists almost entirely of personalities or of descriptions of subjects, the recognition that the methods of a writer demand some, however slight, attention is salutary. Some of Mr. Ransome's judgments would horrify us were his aims more purely literary and less personal. Thus in a literary sense seriously to mention Dumas the elder as worthy of attention on the same page with Flaubert would be almost to commit a crime against the Holy Ghost. But the personality of Dumas and Dumas's vicissitudes are probably more interesting than those of the author of the *Trois Contes*. That is probably why this cheapest of all writers who ever won to fame is still accorded serious attention in England, though he is derided in every other country in the world. We imagine that Mr. Ransome has felt this but has not dared to say as much, just as he hints that personally he prefers Smollett to Fielding but does not care to say that the former has more literary value than the latter.

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THE HILLS AND THE VALE. By RICHARD JEFFERIES. xxxi + 312 : 8 × 5¼ in. Duckworth and Co. 6*s*. net.

We are more thankful to Mr. Edward Thomas than to most of those who search through the files of old periodicals for the forgotten works of literary masters. This volume of essays by Richard Jefferies was very well worth bringing together. And Mr. Thomas's introduction makes pleasant reading about an always interesting personality. Jefferies's literary skill was never considerable nor is his literary value very high, but his personality had about it something acid, something bitter, something almost gnomish. To read in consequence such a volume as this is to have upon one a distinct impression. It is like taking a tonic. Jefferies seldom presents us with any picture, he seldom makes us feel that we are really in the open country or even in the open air. It is much more when we read him as if we were taking a walk with a man so self-concentrated and so strong that we are forced to take no notice of our environment. Rather we participate actively in the mental distraction of a personality that is always baffled in its attempts to read a meaning into things, but one that never desists from the attempt.

BIOGRAPHIES, MEMOIRS, ETC.

THE LIFE OF JOAN OF ARC. By ANATOLE FRANCE. A Translation by Winifred Stephens. Edited by Frederic Chapman. With eight Illustrations. Two volumes. lxxvi + 477 : vi + 423 : 9 × 5¾ in. Index. John Lane. 25*s*. net.

These are, in many ways, the most valuable of the translations of M. France's works that Mr. Lane has given us. They are the most valuable because, in the life of Joan of Arc, the French master deals with facts and his interpretation of facts. M. France's other works are so inspired by a negational humour, entirely French, that we have been very much inclined to doubt the justifiability of translating them into English at all. For, if a man has not sufficient French to be able to understand M. France in the original, it is to be doubted whether he can have attained to a sufficient sympathy with French ideas to appreciate M. France's atmosphere and aroma. The life of Joan of Arc is translated in a humdrum manner which fairly well presents to the reader the facts that the author records, though at times the effect of rendering M. France's irony into English is to give the reader an impression exactly contrary to that which the great writer had intended. This edition contains several corrections by the author as well as a specially written preface in the course of which M. France says :

"My English critics have a special claim to my gratitude. To the memory of Joan of Arc they consecrate a pious zeal which is almost an expiatory worship. Mr. Andrew Lang's praiseworthy scruples with regard to my references have caused me to correct some and to add several.

"The hagiographers alone are openly hostile. They reproach me, not with my manner of explaining the facts, but with having explained them at all. And the more my explanations are clear, natural, rational, and derived from the authoritative sources, the more these explanations displease them. They would wish the history of Joan of Arc to remain mysterious and entirely supernatural. I have restored the maid to life and to humanity. That is my crime. And these zealous inquisitors, so intent on condemning my work, have failed to discover therein any grave fault, any flagrant inexactness. Their severity has had to content itself with a few inadvertences and with a few printer's errors. What flatterers could better have gratified ' the proud weakness of my heart ' ? "

ECONOMICS

BRITAIN FOR THE BRITON. By Sir WILLIAM COOPER, C.I.E. xix + 390 : 9 × 6. Smith Elder and Co. 10*s.* 6*d.* net.

The author uses as a sub-title "Co-operative Working of Agriculture and other industries a necessity. An earnest appeal for Land, Industrial, Economic and other vital Reforms." ". . . Upwards of one-half of the entire population never cease in their efforts to mitigate to some small extent the sufferings of the other half, while the Salvation and Church Armies through their soup-kitchens and night shelters, the perennial 'relief works' of the State and the numerous dodges resorted to by municipal bodies throughout the kingdom to find work for the poor and needy, all proclaim the fact that the British people are in a state of destitution, the like of which finds no parallel in the civilised world. . . .

"This degrading and contemptible condition, which Socialists declare forces 39,000,000 of the population of this country to the verge of destitution, is as unnecessary as it is cruel and disastrous: and when the people realise that this terrible suffering is nothing more nor less than a direct and unavoidable result of the suicidal Free Trade policy which self-interests have thrust upon the country, they will cast it from them as something that is loathsome and unclean."

FICTION

ON THE FORGOTTEN ROAD. By HENRY BAERLEIN. xiii + 279 : 7¾ × 5 in. John Murray. 6*s.* net.

Mr. Baerlein has achieved a singular *tour de force*. Professing to write a novel about the Children's Crusade in 1212, he has given us what may well be considered a minute and comparatively convincing account of the psychology of a mediæval peasant who is a witness of one of those immense and seemingly inexplicable waves of emotion that ran through Christendom in the Middle Ages. Upheld by an immense fervour—as was the case with the liberation of France under Joan of Arc or, for the matter of that, the liberation of Italy by means of Garibaldi and the Immortal Thousand—by a fervour that embraced whole districts, whole nations, whole continents in those days when means of communication were limited, bands of men urged on by patriotism, by the desire for liberty and above all by the voice of Religion then moved from side to side of the known world. In the case of the Crusade of the Innocents it was the children who so stirred themselves up, children preaching the Crusade, children forming the army that set out to the Holy Sepulchre, children filling the ships that set out to return no more. The elders who sanctioned this enterprise were inspired by the mediævally logical idea that, since grown men had failed to recover from pagans the birth-place and sepulchre of our Lord, it was because grown men being sinful are weak instruments to do the work of the Almighty. So without weapons, without victuals, without leaders, without plans, the children set forth. Mr. Baerlein has chosen for his hero the father of the first child preacher of this Crusade, and in a dizzy and muddled manner this hero recounts the wonders that he witnessed. It is really very well done, this contact of a gross and rustic intelligence with things that in their particular way are miraculous, tender and wonderful. M. Anatole France has shown us how his mind—the clear mind of a sceptic—works when it is brought into contact with similar happenings. Mr. Baerlein shows us how the utterly commonplace eye-witness, intent more than anything upon the food he can steal and the listeners he can persuade to hear him—how, in fact, a swine would

regard pearls cast before him. It is a clever, irresponsible and slightly formless performance, giving at once the idea of erudition and of delight in the period that the author has chosen to treat of. We were not, however, aware that French peasants of the thirteenth century were acquainted with the tuber called potato, and we wish that Mr. Baerlein had either omitted or extended his account of his hero's captivity in Egypt.

GIFT BOOKS

THE BOOK OF FRIENDSHIP. Arranged by ARTHUR RANSOME. xx + 478: 9 × 6½ in. Index. T. C. and E. C. Jack. Decorated cloth, 6*s*. net; Buckram, 6*s*. net; Full Parchment, 10*s*. 6*d*. net.

An anthology of passages from literature and from private letters devoted to friendship. If there is no particular reason why such books should not be compiled, there is no particular reason why they should be put forward in a form so bulky if they are to be read. If, however, this particular example is intended merely to lie upon the drawing-room table, it may be commended to those whose drawing-room tables call for such adornments, for it is well bound, printed in a fine large text upon quite good paper. The publisher's advertisement remarks:

"Most anthologies consist entirely of loose passages torn from their contents. The feature of *The Book of Friendship* is that is contains complete essays and complete poems, wherever such are truly pertaining to the subject."

MISCELLANEOUS, POLITICAL, ETC.

GREAT AND GREATER BRITAIN. By J. ELLIS BARKER. ix + 369: 8½ × 5½ in. Smith Elder and Co. 10*s*. 6*d*. net. Index.

Sound imperialistic special pleading, showing the necessities of Tariff Reform, a big navy and dictation from Highbury. The author has previously drawn morals for Great Britain from the example of the Netherlands, which States did not sufficiently apply the doctrine of Protection. Reprinted from the *Nineteenth Century*, the *Fortnightly Review*, &c.

"I acknowledge my indebtedness to the great Imperialist statesmen of the past, and to their worthy successor, Mr. Joseph Chamberlain. I am under the greatest obligation to Mr. Chamberlain. He has been my teacher. He has formed my views, and he has influenced my writings. Therefore I had the strong wish to be allowed to dedicate this book to him, and I feel highly gratified and honoured by his having accepted my dedication."

SERMONS LITERARY AND SCIENTIFIC. By the REV. JOSEPH MILLER, B.D. xi + 416: 7¾ × 5. Rivingtons. 6*s*. 6*d*. net.

Sermons literary and scientific including nine on Eleutherology, or the science of Freedom; and others for seasons of the Church Year to which are added selections illustrative of some of the more distinguished continental preachers. A second series by an author whose former volume of sermons met with general acceptance from such as are of good will. The main topic of this volume is original sin and its relation to human freedom. Austere eloquence with little mercy for those who differ from the author.

"Such is the awful profanity of the pantheistic philosophy which deprives you of a personal God, and nullifies or explains away the facts of redemption, making

each one a god and redeemer to himself, depriving you of the most cherished attributes of personality, representing your self-consciousness and freedom as modes of the infinite essence, which works in and through all things and creatures."

THE UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA. By the Hon. R. H. BRAND. 192 : 9 × 5½ in. Clarendon Press. 6*s.* net.

A clear and concise account of the Constitution of the political Union of South Africa. In order to render clear the provisions, Mr. Brand, who writes, of course, with authority, preludes his analysis with some historical matter and some speculations as to the future. In these latter he is, as a whole, optimistic, nevertheless he does not minimise altogether the difficulties of the race and language questions.

". . . But any one who has any knowledge of the subject is aware that there, too, administration is hampered by constant friction arising from local quarrels and jealousies over language. Nevertheless, one cannot doubt that these difficulties will in time disappear. There are influences at work too strong to be controlled by legislation. As a general rule English parents are prepared that their children shall learn Dutch; while Dutch parents see how essential is a knowledge of English. A story which well illustrates this tendency is told of a small dorp in the Orange River Colony. A Scotch parent complained to the Education Department that his small daughter had been submitted in the playground of the school to the indignity of having a wooden collar placed round her neck. On inquiry it was found that the parents, most of whom were Dutch, thinking that too little English was taught in school hours, had asked that that language might be used during the play hours. There had been invented, in consequence, a mode of punishment which consisted in fastening a wooden collar round the neck of any child who used a Dutch word in the playground."

PERIODICALS

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT REVIEW. Published by Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton, Kent and Co. Price 1*s.*

We quote from the Foreword in this new review:

"It is the first review devoted exclusively to the adequate and impartial treatment of the great range of subjects classed under the term 'Local Government.' . . .

". . . It only remains to add that *The Local Government Review* eschews politics. It knows no party: it has no axe to grind and no pet theories to propound."

This number contains an article, "The Afforestation of Commons," by Sir Robert Hunter, C.B.; "The Impending Revolution in English Local Government," by Mrs. Sidney Webb, D.Litt.; "City Bridges and the Bridge Trust," by Charles Welch, F.S.A., and many others of equal interest. We feel sure it will appeal to a number of thoughtful men and women.

THE ENGLISHWOMAN. 120 pages. 1*s.* net. Grant Richards.

The Englishwoman has gradually attained to a high standard of excellence, and with the tenth number which is now in our hands it has reached a very definite form and tone. Perhaps the most interesting article that it contains is that on the Spirit of Spain by the Rector of the University of Salamanca, in which Don

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Miguel de Unamuno puts forward the plea that Spain should be regarded and judged not as a European nation, but as one floating as it were half-way between Africa and the northern continent. The articles by various ladies upon the field of public work for women and other matters are informative and valuable.

REPRINTS

FATHER AND SON. By EDMUND GOSSE. vi + 335 : 6½ × 4 in. William Heinemann. 2*s.* net.

A pocketable reprint of a volume that acquired a deserved popularity when published anonymously in the winter of 1907. Those who have not read this valuable work would be well advised to take this opportunity, though it would be still better to read the book in its original form since these cheap reprints are always fatiguing to the eye and detract from the gravity and attractiveness of the matter. For those who are interested in the psychology of our own time, Mr. Gosse's *exposé* of his relations with his narrow-minded, conscientious and venerable father is of an extreme value. It will show the reader how simple it was to live under an established rule of life in pre-Darwinian days, and by implication will suggest reasons for many of the phenomena in modern life which we find so bewildering.

VERSE, DRAMA, ETC.

THREE PLAYS. By MRS. W. K. CLIFFORD. 296 : 7 × 5 in. Duckworth and Co. 6*s.* net.

The plays are : *Hamilton's Second Marriage*, which was produced at the Court Theatre in the winter of 1907 ; *Thomas and the Princess ;* and *The Modern Way*, which is adapted from Mrs. Clifford's story of the same name. These plays read well and entertainingly, more particularly *Hamilton's Second Marriage*, which we regard as the best of the dramatic essays of the author of *Aunt Anne*. Mrs. Clifford has so much of the delicacy of the writer of fiction—she has done such good work in her day—that we suspect her touch is too subtle to have much success upon a platform needing effects so broad as the stage. Mrs. Clifford's characters are as unconcerned and as desultory as are most of the people whom we meet in modern drawing-rooms. The stage demands of its characters a certain singleness of purpose and thus such a play as *Hamilton's Second Marriage*, in which both hero and heroine change their minds and their partners for no particular dramatic reason, and in which the mother of the heroine drops her prejudice against the remarriage of divorced people, a prejudice which she is indicated to have inherited from primæval ancestors—when she drops this prejudice also for no very particular reason—such a play must have upon the stage the effect of a blurred photograph. It is very painful for a writer dealing in subtle touches to abandon them suddenly and to employ a more medium course. It is a proceeding distasteful, disgusting and destructive of self-respect. But to this sacrifice Mrs. Clifford must force herself if she is to succeed upon the visible boards. We have said that these plays in book form are entertaining and readable, but as stories they would have been still more entertaining and still more readable. The public is abused because it will not read plays, but the form is disagreeable to the eye and distracting to the attention.

THE SEDUCTIVE COAST. By J. M. STUART-YOUNG. x + 165 : 8½ × 5½. John Ouseley, Ltd. 5*s.* net.

A new volume to be added to the growing library of Colonial verse. *The Seductive Coast* is that portion of West Africa stretching from Sierra Leone southwards. Mr. Stuart-Young has been influenced by Mr. Kipling. He has a considerable love for his subject, and writes lines that scan but occasionally do not rhyme.

To each his taste, corrupt to chaste,
Ours not the Home Land Far ;
But Love and Toil on the sandy soil
Of Pagan Africa.

THE BALLAD OF THE MAD BIRD AND OTHER POEMS. By EDWARD STORER. 40 : 8½ × 4½. Priory Press, Hampstead. 1*s.* net.

Mr. Storer is one of those poets who, with a considerable metrical gift and a pretty fancy, has very little to say. It is a great pity for such writers that there is at the present time no very great national subject for verse, no very broad stream of popular emotion concerning which they might be inspired to write. As it is Mr. Storer is skilful but derivative and not very important.

BY THE WATER WHEEL

WHERE the water wheel is spinning
Fairy woofs of threaded silver,
I sit sometimes in the evening,
Where the water wheel is spinning.

I can hear the slaves a-chanting,
And the doves' soft voices tremble
Round the saffron feet of sunset,
I can hear the slaves a-chanting.

Like a lotus blossom sighing
On the bosom of the river,
All my spirit turns to flower,
Like a lotus blossom sighing.

* * * *

Where the water wheel is turning
All the water's lead to silver,
I sit waiting for my lover,
Where the water wheel is turning.

EXULTATIONS OF EZRA POUND. viii + 51 : 7 × 4½ in. Elkin Mathews. 2*s.* 6*d.* net.

Mr. Pound is a poet whom we have already welcomed. We should be inclined to say that of our younger poets he is the most alive as he is the most rugged, the most harsh and the most wrong-headed. The quality of his thought, his very thoughts themselves, are apt to be obscured by the derivative nature of his language. But he uses his language with such force, hammering as it were word into word, that we can have no doubt as to his vitality and as to his determination to burst his way into Parnassus. And this is a quality too rare in the poet of to-day—a quality so valuable that we are perfectly ready to pardon whole bushelsful of imperfections. Mr. Pound is, of course, soaked in the methods of

the Provençal poets, to their spirit he is much less akin, so that in his renderings and his imitations of their deftnesses there is about him nothing of the deft at all. Richard Cœur de Lion, as we imagine him, violent and unbridled, was also the friend of the Troubadours and Mr. Pound handles his verses very much as Richard I. handled the events of his day. But this metrical practice in which Mr. Pound nowadays exercises himself should in the future prove to be of excellent service to him. He will no doubt find himself: he will certainly find new strength to atone for his present violences. And it appears to us that "The Ballad of the Goodly Fere," which we printed in these columns, has shown that Mr. Pound is already making some of that progress towards maturity and strength.

SONG

Love thou thy dream
All base love scorning,
Love thou the wind
And here take warning
That dreams alone can truly be,
For 'tis in dreams I come to thee.

IN THE NET OF THE STARS. By F. S. FLINT. viii + 69 : 7 × 4½ in. Elkin Mathews. 2*s.* 6*d.* net.

Mr. Flint, also, is a poet whom we have already welcomed. He has a fine and delicate sense of words and a considerable metrical gift. His language, moreover, is lucid and follows his thought delicately and with music. We welcome Mr. Flint's work with all the more pleasure in that, though he has very much of the modern poet's tendency, which we deprecate—the tendency to withdraw himself and to find poetry mostly in pleasances and the Hesperides—Mr. Flint occasionally attempts to render some of the aspects of modern life. And it is from such rendering that—if ever it will—poetry will once more regain its hold upon the attentions of the English-speaking world. We wish Mr. Flint would accept the conditions in which he lives with more composure and see in them the poetry that exists now as in every other age. But it is better to look at modern life and to hate it than never to have looked at it at all.

AS I PACED THE STREETS

As I paced the streets, there came to me,
Although the air with smoke was dim,
And bleak, black walls were frowning grim,
The vision of a sunlit sea.

A crumbling cliff all hacked and torn,
A waste of sand dunes, grey and wide,
And wheeling gulls that dipped and cried,
And scarlet poppies in the corn.

The traffic's jangle and its roar
And human clamour could not quell
The low sad murmur and the spell
Of languid waves that laced the shore.

* * * *

As I pace the streets, there come to me,
In an awful wave that stops my breath,
The clutching, griping thought of death,
And the bitter taste of an unknown sea.

NEW POEMS. By WILLIAM WATSON. 133 : $7\frac{1}{2} \times 5\frac{1}{2}$ in. John Lane. 5*s.* net.

It is pleasant once more to welcome a volume by Mr. Watson, who for so long has kept silence. And if it is difficult to understand why in the eighties and nineties Mr. Watson's work was acclaimed with such unlimited enthusiasm, it is pleasant to see that his calm and classic hand has lost none of its skill. It is only public events which will rouse Mr. Watson to anything like passion and in this more than in anything else he resembles poets of an old, of an almost vanished school. In a world where poetry has become a vehicle only for intimate self-revelations Mr. Watson remains calmly impersonal. If he seldom lets himself go he retains always his self-respect: if never, stung by personal desires, does he climb to great heights he seldom falls into abysses. And if he never very much excites our enthusiasm, never also does he repel us. He wears the cloak of the grand manner in an age of little men and we hope that when he ascends—surely the last poet to enter Parnassus his place may not be very far from the tranquil throne of Wordsworth.

Histoire de la Princesse Zulkaïs et du Prince Kalilah

By William Beckford *

Mon père, seigneur, ne doit pas vous être inconnu puisque le Calife Motassem lui avoit confié les fertiles provinces de Masre. Il auroit en effet été bien digne de ce poste élevé si une prévoyance outrée etoit pardonnable dans l'homme foible et ignorant.

L'Emir Abou-Taher Achmed étoit bien éloigné de faire cette observation. Il n'alloit que trop souvent au-devant de la providence, il vouloit subjuguer les événemens en dépit des décrets du ciel. Décrets terribles ! Vous devez tôt ou tard être remplis ! C'est en vain qu'on vous oppose ! Pendant une longue suite d'années, tout fleuri sous le gouvernement de mon père, et parmi les Emirs qui se sont distingués dans ce beau royaume le nom d'Abou-Taher Achmed ne sera pas oublié. Pour suivre son penchant calculateur, il avoit fait venir des Nubiens expérimentés, qui, nés aux sources du Nil, s'étoient attachés à suivre ce fleuve dans son cours, connoissoient toutes ses vicissitudes, et les propriétés de ses eaux. Ce fut sous leur inspection qu'il fit exécuter le projet impie de régler les débordemens du Nil, et par là, surchargea les terres d'une végétation qui les épuisa ensuite. Les peuples, toujours esclaves des apparences, applaudissoient à ses entreprises, travailloient avec ardeur aux infinités de canaux qu'il faisoit creuser, et éblouis par ses succès, passoient légèrement sur les malheureuses circonstances qui les accompagnoient. Sur dix vaisseaux que mon père envoyoit en course, et auxquels il preserivoit selon sa fantaisie, le moment du départ et du retour, si un revenoit chargé de richesses, le naufrage des neuf autres étoit compté pour rien. Comme d'ailleurs le commerce prospéroit par les soins et la vigilance de l'Emir, il se trompoit lui-même sur ses pertes, et s'attribuoit toute la gloire de ses acquisitions.

Bientôt Abou-Taher Achmed vint à se persuader que s'il pouvoit retrouver les sciences et les arts des anciens Egyptiens, rien ne lui seroit impossible. Il crut que dans ces siècles reculés les hommes s'étoient appropriés quelques rayons de la divinité même, pour opérer leurs merveilles, et ne désespéra pas de ramener ces tems glorieux. A cet effet, il fit chercher, parmi les ruines dont ce pays abonde, ces tablettes mystérieuses qui, selon le rapport des sages qui fourmilloient à sa cour, indiquoient les moyens d'acquérir ces sciences et ces arts, de découvrir les trésors, et de

* This story, hitherto unpublished, is printed by arrangement with Mr. Lewis Melville. It is an exact copy, but for the correction of some very obvious and trifling blunders, of the manuscript.

subjuguer les intelligences qui les gardent. Jamais, avant lui, aucun Musulman ne s'étoit cassé la tête pour des hiéroglyphes. On lui en apportoit de toute espèce des provinces les plus reculées. Ces bizarres symboles étoient fidèlement copiés sur des toiles de lin. Je me souviens de les avoir vus mille fois étendus sur les toits de nôtre palais. Jamais abeilles ne furent plus ardentes autour des fleurs que nos sages après ces peintures ; mais comme ils en avoient chacun une différente opinion, leurs argumens dégénéroient en disputes. Non seulement ils passoient les jours à cette occupation, la lune même éclairoit souvent leurs recherches. Ils n'osoient pas allumer des fanaux sur les terrasses de peur d'alarmer les fidèles Musulmans qui commençoient à blamer cette vénération pour une antiquité idolâtre, et à qui ces symboles, ces figures faisoient horreur.

Cependant l'Emir, qui n'auroit eu garde de négliger les moindres affaires pour ces étranges études, n'étoit pas si exact dans ce qui regardoit les observances religieuses. Il oubloit souvent de faire les ablutions ordonnées par la loi. Les femmes de son harem s'en apercevoient bien, mais n'osoient rien dire, car elles avoient perdu beacoup de leur influence sur lui. Un jour Shaban, le chef de ses eunuques, vieillard très pieux, se presenta devant lui avec une aiguière et un bassin d'or dans les mains, en lui disant : " Les eaux du Nil nous ont été données pour laver toutes souillures ; leurs sources sont dans les nuages de l'empyrée, elles ne découlent pas des palais des Idoles : servez-vous-en, car vous en avez besoin."

L'Emir, frappé de l'action et du discours de Shaban, se rendit à sa uste remontrance, et au lieu de dépaqueter un grande ballot de toiles peintes, qui venoit de lui arriver de bien loin, il passa dans l'intérieur de son harem, et ordonna à Shaban de faire servir la collation dans la salle au treillage d'or, et d'y rassembler toutes ses esclaves et tous ses oiseaux—une infinité desquels ils gardoient dans des volières de bois de sandal.

Aussitôt le palais retentit du son des instruments, et on vit arriver des files d'esclaves dans leurs plus attrayantes parures, qui toutes menoient en lesse un paôn plus blanc que la neige. Une seule d'entre elles, dont la taille fine et gracieuse charmoit la vue, n'avoit point d'oiseau, et tenoit son voile baissé. " Que signifie cette éclipse ? " dit l'Emir à Shaban.—" Seigneur," repondit-il, d'un air joyeux, " je vaux mieux que tous vos astrologues, car c'est moi qui ai découvert cette belle étoile ; mais n'imaginez pas qu'elle soit encore sous votre puissance ; son père, le vénérable et saint Iman Abzenderoud, ne consentira jamais qu'elle fasse votre bonheur, à moins que vous ne fassiez vos ablutions avec plus de régularité, et n'abandonniez vos sages et vos hiéroglyphes."

Mon père, sans répondre à Shaban, courut arracher le voile à Ghulendi-Bégum (c'étoit le nom de la fille d'Abzenderoud), et mit tant d'impétuosité à ce premier mouvement qu'il manqua d'écraser deux paôns, et renversa en effet plusieurs corbeilles de fleurs. A cette brusque vivacité succéda une sorte d'extase. Enfin il s'écria : " Qu'elle est belle ! Qu'elle est céleste ! Allons, qu'on aille me chercher l'Iman de la Mosquée de Soussouf—qu'on pare la chambre nuptiale, et que tout ceci soit fini dans une heure." —" Mais, seigneur," dit Shaban d'un air consterné, " vous de songez pas que Ghulendi-Bégum ne sauroit vous epouser sans le consentement de son père, qui veut qu'auparavant vous renonciez . . ."—" Que vas tu radoter

encore," interrompit l'Emir. "Me crois-tu assez sot pour ne pas préférer cette jeune vierge, fraiche comme la rosée du matin, à des hiéroglyphes moisis et couleur de cendre ; quant à Abzenderoud, va le chercher bien vite, si tu veux, car je n'attendrai qu'autant qu'il me plaira."—"Hâtez-vous, Shaban," dit modestement Ghulendi-Bégum, "hâtez-vous ; vous voyez que je ne puis faire ici qu'une médiocre résistance."—"C'est ma faute," marmotta l'eunuque en s'en allant, "et je la réparerai si je puis."

En effet il vola chez Abzenderoud ; mais ce fidèle serviteur d'Allah étoit sorti de chez lui, dès le grand matin, pour aller dans la campagne faire ses pieuses analyses sur la végétation des plantes, et la vie des insectes. Son visage se couvrit d'une pâleur mortelle en voyant Shaban fondre sur lu comme un corbeau de mauvais présage, et en apprenant, par ses paroles entrecoupées, que l'Emir n'avoit rien promis, et qu'il pourroit bien arriver trop tard pour éxiger les saintes conditions qu'il avoit profondément méditées. Il ne perdit pourtant point courage, et atteignit le palais de mon père dans peu de momens ; mais il étoit malheureusement si essoufflé de sa course rapide que, se laissant tomber sur un sopha, il fut plus d'une heure sans pouvoir reprendre haleine.

Tandis que tous les eunuques s'empressoient à secourir le saint personnage, Shaban étoit bien vite monté à l'appartement des plaisirs d'Abou-Taher Achmed, mais son zèle s'étoit ralenti en voyant que la porte en étoit gardée par deux eunuques noirs qui, brandissants leurs sabres, lui signifièrent qu'à un seul pas de plus qu'il hazarderoit en avant, sa tête tomberoit à ses pieds. Shaban n'avoit donc eu rien de mieux à faire que de retourner auprès d'Abzenderoud, dont il regardoit les suffocations d'un œil égaré, et tout en se lamentant de l'imprudence qu'il avoit commise en mettant Ghulendi-Bégum au pouvoir de l'Emir.

Malgré l'attention que donnoit mon père à l'entretien de sa nouvelle Sultane, il avoit entendu quelque chose de la dispute des nègres avec Shaban, et avoit compris de quoi il etoit question—ainsi, lorsqu'il le jugea à propos, il vint trouver Abzenderoud dans la salle au treillage d'or, et, lui présentant sa fille, l'assura qu'il en avoit fait sa femme en l'attendant.

A ces paroles, l'Iman jetta un cri lugubre et perçant, qui lui dégagea la respiration, et roulant les yeux d'une manière effrayante, "Malheureuse !" dit-il à la Sultane, "sais-tu que les actions précipitées n'ont jamais une heureuse issue ! Ton père vouloit assurer ton sort ; tu n'as pas attendu l'effet de ses soins, ou plutôt c'est le ciel qui se rit de la prudence humaine. Je ne demande plus rien à l'Emir—qu'il fasse ce qu'il voudra de toi et de ses hiéroglyphes, je n'entrevois qu'un avenir funeste, mais je n'en serai pas témoin. Jouis de la courte ivresse des plaisirs ;—pour moi, je vais chercher l'ange de la mort ; et j'espère que dans trois jours je me reposerai en paix dans le sein de nôtre grand prophète."

En achevant ces mots il se leva en chancelant ; sa fille veut en vain le retenir, il arrache sa robe de ses mains tremblantes, elle tombe evanouie, et dans le tems que l'Emir éperdu tâchoit de la rendre à la vie, l'obstiné Abzenderoud sort en murmurant. On crut d'abord que l'homme pieux ne tiendroit pas exactement parole, et qu'il se laisseroit consoler, mais on se trompa. En entrant chez lui, il commença par se boucher les oreilles avec du coton pour n'entendre ni solicitations ni clameurs, puis s'étant assis sur les nattes de sa cellule, les jambes croisées et la tête dans ses mains, il resta

dans cette posture sans parler et sans prendre de nourriture, et enfin expira au bout de trois jours ainsi qu'il l'avoit promis. On lui fit de magnifiques obsèques, dans lesquelles Shaban ne manqua pas de faire éclater sa douleur en se déchiquetant la peau sans miséricorde, et en arosant la terre de ruisseaux de sang ;—après quoi, ayant fait mettre du baume à ses blessures, il retourna remplir les devoirs de sa charge.

Cependant l'Emir n'avoit pas peu de peine à calmer le désespoir de Ghulendi-Bégum, il maudissoit souvent les hiéroglyphes qui en étoient la première cause ;—enfin ses attentions touchèrent le cœur de la Sultane, elle reprit sa tranquillité, devint grosse, et tout rentra dans l'ordre accoutumé.

L'Emir ayant toujours l'esprit rempli de la magnificence des anciens Pharaons, bâtit, à leur imitation, un palais avec douze pavillons, qu'il prétendoit remplir bientôt d'autant de fils ; mais, par malheur, ses femmes ne faisoient que des filles. A chaque naissance, il grommeloit, grinçoit des dents, accusoit Mahomet d'un contretems si fâcheux, et seroit devenu tout à fait insupportable si Ghulendi-Bégum ne l'avoit pas adouci. Elle l'attiroit tous les soirs dans son appartement où, par milles inventions curieuses, elle trouvoit le secret d'attiédir l'air quand on étouffoit ailleurs. Pendant sa grossesse, mon père ne quittait point l'estrade sur laquelle elle étoit couchée. C'étoit dans une vaste et longue galerie qui donnoit sur le Nil, de manière que quand on se plaçoit sur les sophas, ce fleuve paroissoit à niveau, et on pouvoit y jetter les grains des grenades qu'on mangeoit. Les meilleures danseuses, les plus excellentes musiciennes, ne quittoient jamais ce lieu agréable. On y representoit tous les soirs des pantomimes à la lumière de milles lampes d'or, qu'on posoit sur le plancher pour faire mieux ressortir la finesse et la légèreté des pieds. Toutes ces danseuses coutoient des sommes immenses à mon père, en mules à frange d'or, et en sandales etincellantes de pierreries, aussi, quand elles étoient toutes en mouvement, à peine pouvoit on en soutenir l'éclat. Malgré cette accumulation de splendeurs, la Sultane passoit des jours bien tristes sur son estrade. Elle voyoit défiler devant elle ces objets si pleins de brillant et de charme avec la même indifférence qu'un malheureux que l'insomnie tourmente contemple les vacillations des étoiles. Tantôt elle pensoit à la colère comme prophétique de son vénérable père, tantôt elle déploroit sa mort étrange et prématurée. Mille fois elle interrompoit les chœurs en s'écriant : " Le destin a ordonné ma perte, le ciel ne m'accordera pas un fils, et mon mari me bannira de sa vue." Les inquiétudes de son esprit aiguisoient les douleurs de son état. Mon père en fut si excessivement attendri que, pour la première fois, il eut recours aux prières, et ordonna qu'on en fit dans toutes les mosquées ;—il ne négligea pas non plus de faire des aumônes, et à cet effet fit publier que tous les mendians eussent à se rassembler dans la cour plus spacieuse du palais, où l'on leur serviroit du ris à discretion. Chaque matin on s'étouffoit aux portes tant la foule étoit grande ;—on arrivoit de toutes parts, par terre, et par la fleuve. Il y avoit des villages entiers qui descendoient sur des radeaux—tous avoient un appétit dévorant, car les édifices que mon père avoit fait élever, sa chasse aux hiéroglyphes, et l'entretien de ses sages, avoient un peu répandu la disette dans le pays.

Parmi ceux qui venoient de très loin, se trouva un vieillard des plus extraordinaires :—c'étoit le pieux Abou-Gabdolle Guehaman, hermite du

grande désert de sable. Il avoit huit pieds de haut, mais si peu proportionné pour la grandeur, d'une maigreur si extrême, qu'il ressembloit à un squelette et étoit affreux à voir. Cependant cette lugubre machine renfermoit l'âme la plus expansive et la plus religieuse de l'univers. Avec une voix claire et tonnante il annonçoit les volontés du prophète, et disoit sans détours que c'étoit dommage qu'un prince qui donnoit du ris aux pauvres en si grande abondance fut un amateur décidé des hiéroglyphes. On s'attroupoit autour de lui—les Imans, les Moullahs, les Muézins ne chantoient que ses louanges. On baisoit ses pieds quoiqu'incrustés du sable de son désert, et même on en ramassoit des grains qu'on conservoit dans des boites d'ambre.

Un jour il annonça les vérités, et l'horreur des sciences impies, d'une voix si retentissante que les grands étendards rangés devant le palais en tremblèrant. Cette voix terrible pénétra jusque dans l'intérieur du harem : les femmes et les eunuques s'évanouissoient dans la salle au treillage d'or, et dans la longue galerie les danseuses restoient un pied en l'air, les baladines n'avoient plus le courage de faire des grimaces, les musiciennes laissoient tomber par terre leurs instrumens, et Ghulendi-Bégum pensa mourir de frayeur sur son estrade.

Abou-Taher Achmed resta stupéfait ;—sa conscience lui reprochoit ses goûts idolâtres, et pendant quelques instans de remords il crut que l'ange vengeur venoit le pétrifier, lui et les peuples confiés à sa charge.

Après avoir resté quelques tems debout au milieu de la galerie aux estrades, avec les bras étendus en l'air, il appella Shaban, et lui dit : " Le soleil ne perd pas son éclat, le Nil reste paisible, que signifie donc ce cri surnaturel dont mon palais vient de retentir ? "—" Seigneur," repondit le pieux eunuque, " cette voix est celle de la vérité qui vous parle par la bouche du vénérable Abou-Gabdolle Guehaman, hermite du désert sablonneux, le plus fidèle, le plus zélé des serviteurs du prophète, qui en neuf jours a fait trois cents lieues pour éprouver votre hospitalité, et vous faire part de ses inspirations. Ne négligez pas les conseils d'un homme qui surpasse en lumières, en piété, et en taille, les hommes les plus éclairés, les plus dévots, et les plus gigantesques. Tout votre peuple est en extase, on ne fait plus de commerce dans la ville, on néglige pour l'entendre les promenades du soir dans les jardins ; les faiseurs de contes restent abandonnés sur les bords des fontaines. Jussouf n'étoit pas plus sage, et ne connoissoit pas mieux l'avenir que lui."

A ces derniers mots, l'Emir fut frappé tout d'un coup de l'idée de consulter Abou-Gabdolle sur l'état de sa famille, et sur les magnifiques projets qu'il avoit en tête pour les fils qui ne lui étoient pas encore nés. Il se trouvoit très heureux d'avoir à faire à un prophète vivant. Jusqu'à lors il n'avoit connu que les momies de ces personnages fameux et inspirés ; ainsi, il résolut de se faire amener l'homme extraordinaire même dans l'intérieur de son harem :—les Pharaons en usoient de la sorte avec leur négromanciens, et il vouloit toujours les imiter. Il dit donc gracieusement à l'eunuque de l'aller chercher. Shaban, transporté de joie, courut bien vite porter cette invitation à l'hermite, qui ne parut pas aussi charmé que le peuple. Ceux-ci remplissoient l'air d'acclamations, pendant qu'Abou-Gabdolle restoit les mains jointes, et les yeux levés vers le ciel dans une trance prophétique. Il jettoit de tems en tems de profonds soupirs, et

après un long recueillement, s'écria enfin avec sa voix tonnante: "Les volontés d'Allah doivent s'accomplir, je ne suis que sa créature! Eunuque, je suis prêts à te suivre, mais qu'on abatte les portes du palais; les serviteurs du Très Haut ne doivent pas se courber." Le peuple ne se le fit pas dire deux fois—ils mirent tous la main à l'œuvre, et dans un instant on détruisit des ouvrages d'un travail le plus admirable.

Au bruit des portes qui tomboient avec fracas, des cris perçants s'élèverent dans le harem. Abou-Taher Achmed commençoit à se repentir de sa curiosité, mais il ordonna, quoiqu'à contre-cœur, qu'on rendit les passages du harem accessibles à ce colosse de piété, dans la crainte que les enthousiastes ne pénétrassent dans les appartements qu'occupoient ses femmes et où on gardoit ses trésors. Ces alarmes étoient pourtant bien vaines—le saint homme avoit congédié ses devots admirateurs. On m'a assuré que s'étant tous agenouillés pour recevoir sa bénédiction, il leur dit avec une lugubre emphase: "Retirez-vous; restez en paix dans vos demeures, et sachez que quoiqu'il arrive, Abou-Gabdolle Guehaman est toujours préparé." Puis se tournant vers le palais, "O dômes éblouissants," s'écria-t-il, "recevez-moi, et que ce qui va s'ensuivre ne ternisse pas vos splendeurs!"

Cependant on avoit tout arrangé dans l'intérieur du harem—les paravens étoient disposés en bon ordre, les portières étoient tirées, d'amples rideaux entouroient les estrades de la longue galerie qui règnoit autour de l'édifice, et cachoient les Sultanes et les princesses leurs filles.

Tant d'apprêts avoit causé une fermentation générale. La curiosité étoit dans toute sa vigueur, quand l'hermite, foulant aux pieds les décombres des portes, entra majestueusement dans la salle au treillage d'or. La magnificence de ce lieu n'attira pas même ses regards—ils étoient mornement fixés sur le pavé. Enfin il pénétra jusqu'à la grande galerie des femmes. Celles-ci—qui n'étoient point du tout accoutumées à des objets si gigantesques et si décharnés—poussèrent les hauts cris, et demandèrent des essences et des cordiaux pour se munir le cœur contre le funeste effet de l'apparition d'un pareil fantôme.

L'hermite ne fit pas la moindre attention au vacarme qu'il entendoit de tout côtés. Il continuoit gravement son chemin, quand l'Emir vint au-devant de lui, et le prenant par le pan de sa robe, le conduisit avec beaucoup de cérémonie à l'estrade de la galerie qui envisageoit le Nil. On servit d'abord des bassins de confitures et des liqueurs orthodoxes, mais quoiqu'Abou-Gabdolle Guehaman avoit l'air de mourir de faim, il refusa de toucher à ces rafraîchissemens, en disant que depuis quatre-vingt-dix années il n'avoit bû que de la rosée du ciel, et mangé que des locustes de ses sables. L'Emir, qui trouva ce régime selon l'étiquette des prophètes, ne le pressa pas d'avantage, et commença à entrer en matière avec lui, en lui parlant du chagrin qu'il avoit de se voir sans héritier mâle, malgré toutes les prières qu'on avoit faites pour en obtenir, et toutes les flatteuses éspérances que les Imans lui avoient donnes. "Mais c'est à présent," continua-t-il, "que je suis sûr d'avoir ce bonheur—les sages, les médecins me l'annoncent, et mes propres observations le confirment: ainsi, ce n'est pas pour savoir ce qui en est que j'ai voulu vous voir. C'est pour vous demander des conseils sur l'éducation que je donnerai à ce fils, ou plutôt à ces deux fils qui me vont naître, car, sans doute, le ciel, en reconnoisance de mes

aumônes, accorda une double fertilité à la Sultane Ghulendi-Bégum, puisqu'elle est deux fois plus grosse qu'à l'ordinaire."

Sans rien répondre, l'hermite branla trois fois la tête. Mon père, fort étonné, lui demanda s'il étoit fâché de son bonheur. "Ah! prince aveugle," lui repondit-il, en poussant un soupir qui sembloit venir d'un tombeau, "pourquoi importuner le ciel par des vœux téméraires; respectez ses décrets; il sait mieux que les hommes ce qui leur est convenable. Malheur à vous, et au fils que vous forcerez, sans doute, dans le sentier de vos perverses opinions, au lieu de le soumettre humblement à la direction de la providence. Si les puissants de la terre savoient toutes les infortunes qu'ils doivent s'attirer, ils trembleroient au milieu de leurs splendeurs. Pharaon a senti cette vérité, mais trop tard; il poursuivit les enfans de Moussa en dépit des volontés divines, et il mourut de la mort des impies. A quoi servent les aumônes quand le cœur est rebelle? Ceux qui doivent prier pour vous au lieu de demander au prophète l'héritier que vous mettrez dans le chemin de la destruction, devroient l'implorer pour que Ghulendi-Bégum expire—oui qu'elle expire avant que de mettre au monde des créatures présomptueuses que vôtre conduite précipitera dans l'abîme. Encore une fois je vous somme de vous soumettre. Si l'ange d'Allah menace les jours de la Sultane, n'ayez pas recours à vos magiciens pour suspendre le coup fatal—laissez-le frapper—qu'elle meure!—ne frémissez pas, Emir;—n'endurcissez pas votre cœur; encore une fois, souvenez-vous de Pharaon et des eaux qui l'ont englouti."—"Souviens toi toi-même," s'écria mon père en écumant de rage, et se levant de l'estrade pour courir au secours de la Sultane, qui ayant tout entendu s'étoit évanouie derrière les courtines; "souviens-toi que le Nil est sous ces fenêtres, et que ton odieuse carcasse mérite bien d'y être jettée."

"Je ne te crains pas; le prophète d'Allah ne craint que lui," s'écria à son tour l'hermite gigantesque, en se levant sur la pointe des pieds et touchant de sa main les appuis du dôme. "Ha ha! tu ne crains rien," s'écrièrent toutes les femmes et les eunuques, en sortant comme des tigres de leur tannières. "Exécrable meurtrier! Tu viens de mettre nôtre chère maîtresse à l'agonie, et tu ne veux pas craindre! Va—sers de pâture aux monstres du fleuve!" En hurlant ces mots, ils se jettèrent tous à la fois sur Abou-Gabdolle Guehaman, le firent tomber, l'étranglèrent sans miséricorde, et le précipitèrent dans un gouffre où le Nil se perdoit parmi de noirs grillages.

L'Emir étonné d'un acte si atroce et si brusque, resta les yeux fixés sur les eaux, mais le corps ne reparoissoit plus sur leur suface, et Shaban, qui ne faisoit que de survenir l'étourdissoit de ses cris. Enfin il se retourna pour envisager les coupables: ils étoient tous dispersés, enveloppés dans le rideaux de la galerie; et s'évitant les uns les autres, ils restoient accablés de leur crime.

Ghulendi, qui n'étoit revenue à elle-même que pour voir cette scène d'horreur, étoit dans des transes mortelles; ses convulsions, ses cris agonisans attirèrent enfin l'Emir auprès d'elle. Il innonde sa main de ses larmes —elle ouvre des yeux égarés, et s'écrie: "O Allah! Allah! détruis une créature qui n'a que trop vécu puisqu'elle est la cause d'un si énorme forfait —ne permets pas que je mette au monde . . ."—"Arrête," interrompit l'Emir, en retenant ses mains qu'elle tournoit contre elle-même; "tu ne

mourras pas ; et mes enfans vivront pour donner un démenti à cet insensé de squelette qu'on aurait du seulement mépriser ; qu'on aille chercher mes sages—je veux qu'ils employent toute leur science pour retenir ton âme, et conserver le fruit de ton sein." Les sages furent en effet mandés. Ils requirent d'avoir une cour toute à eux dans le palais pour faire leurs opérations. Bientôt la clarté des flammes qui s'élevèrent pénétra dans la galerie : la Sultane se leva malgré tous les efforts qu'on pût faire pour l'en empêcher, et courut s'établir sur le balcon qui donnoit sur le Nil. La vue en étoit fort solitaire ; il ne paroissoit pas un seul bateau sur le fleuve ; dans le lointain on découvroit des plaines de sable que le vent élevoit de tems en tems en tourbillons ; la réverbération du soleil couchant teignoit les eaux de couleur de sang. A peine le crépuscule du soir s'étoit étendu sur l'horizon qu'un vent furieux brisa les jalousies de la galerie. La Sultane éperdu, le cœur palpitant, voulut se plonger dans l'intérieur de l'appartement ; mais un pouvoir irrésistible la retint, et l'obligea de contempler, malgré elle, la scène lugubre qui s'offroit à sa vue. Il régnoit un grand silence—la terre s'étoit insensiblement couverte de ténèbres, quand une lumière bleuâtre sillona les nues du côté des pyramides. La princesse découvrit ces énormes masses aussi distinctement qu'en plein jour. Cette soudaine perspective la glaça d'effroi ; elle tâchat plusieurs fois d'appeller ses esclaves ; mais sa voix s'éteignait ; elle essaya de battre des mains, mais elle n'en eut pas la force.

Pendant qu'elle étoit dans une agitation semblable à celle qu'on éprouve dans des rêves horribles, une voix lamentable agita l'air autour de ses oreilles, et prononça ces mots : " Mon dernier soupir vient de s'exhaler dans les eaux de ce fleuve ; on a tâché en vain d'étouffer la voix de la vérité —elle sort de l'abîme de la mort. Malheureuse mère ! regarde d'où part cette fatale lumière, et frémis."

Ghulendi-Bégum n'en pût entendre d'avantage ; elle tomba sans connoissance ; ses femmes, inquiètes pour elle, accoururent dans ce moment en jettant de terribles cris. Les sages montèrent, et mirent dans les mains de mon père effaré le puissant élixir qu'ils avoient composé. A peine quelques gouttes tomberent sur le sein de la Sultane, que son âme, qui étoit prête à suivre les ordres d'Asraël, retourna, comme en dépit de la nature, ranimer ses organes ; ses yeux se rouvrirent encore sur le sillon funeste, dont la trace n'avoit point cessé d'être visible dans le firmament ; elle étendit son bras, et montrant du doigt à l'Emir cet objet d'effroi, elle fut saisie des douleurs de l'enfantement, et dans le fort d'une agonie inexprimable, mit au monde un fils et une fille, qui sont les deux malheureux que vous voyez ici.

La joie d'avoir un enfant mâle fut bien tempérée dans l'âme de l'Emir en voyant expirer ma mère ; mais, malgré son excessive douleur, il ne perdit pas la tête, et nous mit tout de suite entre les mains de ses sages. Les nourrices qu'on avoit retenues en grand nombre, voulurent s'y opposer, mais les vieillards, qui murmuroient tous à la fois leur enchantemens, leur imposèrent silence. Les cuves cabalistiques dans lesquelles on devoit nous baigner étoient déjà toutes rangées—la mixtion d'herbes exhaloit une vapeur dont tout le palais étoit rempli. Shaban, à qui l'odeur inconcevable de ces drogues infernales donnoit au cœur, avoit toutes les peines du monde de s'empêcher d'appeller les Imans et les docteurs de la loi pour s'opposer à

ces cérémonies impies. Plut au ciel qu'il en eut eu le courage ! Ah ! combien ces bains funestes n'ont-ils pas influé sur nous. . . . Enfin, seigneur, on nous plongea successivement et ensemble dans ces compositions, qui devoient nous donner une force et une intelligence plus qu'humaine, mais qui n'ont fait que répandre dans nos veines une sensibilité trop exquise, et le poison d'une volupté insatiable.

C'étoit au son des baguettes d'airain qui frappoient sur les métaux, c'étoit au milieu des fumigations épaisses qui sortoient des monceaux d'herbes, qu'on invoquoit les Ginns, et particulièrement ceux qui président aux pyramides pour nous douer des talens merveilleux. Après cette opération, on nous livra aux nourrices, qui à peine pouvoient nous contenir dans leurs bras, tant nôtre vivacité étoit pétillante. Ces bonnes femmes versoient des larmes en voyant le bouillonnement de notre sang, et tachèrent en vain de l'appaiser en nettoyant nos membres des onguens qui s'y étoient attachés ; mais hélas le mal étoit fait ! Si même nous rentrions quelques fois dans le néant de notre âge, mon père qui vouloit, à tout prix, avoir des enfans extraordinaires, nous emoustilloit avec une préparation de simples échauffants, et de lait de négresses. Nous devenions ainsi d'une ardeur et d'une fougue insoutenable. A sept ans on ne pouvoit plus nous contredire : à la moindre restreinte nous faisions des cris enragés, et mordions nos surveillantes jusqu'au sang. Shaban, qui avoit sa bonne part de nos égratignures, gémissoit en silence, car l'Emir ne voyoit dans nos vivacités que les élans d'un génie qui nous rendoit égaux à Saurid et à Charobe. Mais qu'on ignoroit la véritable cause de ces mouvemens impétueux ! Ceux qui veulent trop envisager la lumière deviennent les plus aveugles : mon père ne remarquoit pas encore que notre fierté n'étoit jamais exercée l'un contre l'autre, que nous nous cédions mutuellement, que Kalilah, mon frère, ne trouvoit le calme que dans mes bras ; et pour moi je ne connoissois le bonheur qu'en l'accablant de caresses.

Jusqu'à lors on nous avoit tout enseigné ensemble ; le même livre étoit exposé devant nos yeux, et nous en tournions alternativement les feuillets. Quoiqu'on exigeat de mon frère des études rigoureuses et prématurées, je voulois les partager avec lui. Abou-Taher Achmed, qui n'avoit a cœur que l'agrandissement de son fils, ordonnoit qu'on ne me rebuta point, parcequ'il voyoit qu'il ne vouloit travailler qu'à mes côtés.

On nous instruisit également dans l'histoire des siècles les plus reculés, et dans la géographie des climats les plus lointains. Les sages ne cessoient jamais de nous inculquer la morale abstruse et idéale qu'ils prétendoient être cachée sous les hiéroglyphes. Ils remplissoient nos oreilles d'un verbiage magnifique sur la sagesse, la prévoyance et les magazins des Pharaons, quelquefois ils les comparoient à des fourmis, quelquefois à des éléphants. Ils nous inspiroient la plus ardente curiosité sur ces montagnes de pierres sous lesquelles ces rois sont ensevelis ; ils nous forcèrent d'apprendre par cœur le long catalogue des architectes et des ouvriers qui y avoient travaillé, nous imposoient la tâche de calculer combien il avoit fallu de provisions pour tant d'hommes, et combien il y avoit de fils dans chaque aulne de la soie dont le Sultan Saurid avoit couvert sa pyramide. Par-dessus tout ce fatras, ces fatiguans vieillards nous cassoient la tête avec une impitoyable grammaire de la langue que parloient les anciens prêtres dans leurs labyrinthes souterrains.

Les jeux d'enfance qu'on nous permettoit dans nos heures de récréation ne nous plaisoient que lorsque nous étions seuls ensemble. Les princesses nos sœurs nous ennuioient mortellement. Elles avoient beau broder des vestes splendides pour mon frère : Kalilah les dédaignoit, et ne ceignoit sa belle chevelure que des mousselines qui avoient flotté sur le sein de sa chère Zulkaïs. Ces princesses nous invitoient quelques fois sous les douze pavillons qu'elles occupoient, car mon père désespérant d'avoir autant de fils, et concentrant toute son affection dans celui qu'il avoit, les leur avoit abandonnées et en avoit fait construire un plus superbe pour mon frère et pour moi. Cet édifice, couronné de cinq dômes, et situé dans un bosquet épais, étoit tous les soirs la scène des plaisirs les plus tumultueux du harem. Mon père y venoit avec un cortège de ses plus belles esclaves—chacune y paroissoit tenant a la main un cierge blanc dans un flambeau de filagramme. Combien de fois l'apparition de ces lumières à travers des arbres n'a-t-elle pas fait battre nos cœurs ? Tout ce qui rompoit notre solitude nous déplaisoit au souverain degré. Nous cacher parmi les feuilles et entendre leurs murmures en nous embrassant, nous sembloit plus doux que le son des luths et les chœurs des musiciennes. Ces molles rêveries déplaisoient à mon père ; il nous entraînoit par force dans les salons à coupoles, et nous obligeoit de prendre part aux amusemens.

Chaque année l'Emir devenait plus rigoureux. Il n'osoit pas entièrement nous séparer, crainte de désespérer son fils, mais pour le retirer de ses langoureux plaisirs, il tâcha de le jetter dans la compagnie des jeunes garçons de son age. Le jeu de cannes, si fameux parmi les Arabes, fut introduit dans les cours du palais. Kalilah y mettoit beaucoup d'acharnement, mais ce n'étoit que pour terminer plus vite le combat, et revoler auprès de moi de meilleure heure. Alors nous lisions ensemble les amours de Jussouf et de Zélica, ou quelqu'autre amoureux poème,—alors nous profitions de ces momens de liberté pour errer dans le labyrinthe des corridors qui donnoient sur le Nil, toujours entrelassant nos bras, toujours nos yeux attachés l'un sur l'autre. Il étoit presque impossible de nous surprendre dans ces détours, et l'inquiétude que nous donnions ne faisoit qu'augmenter nos délices.

Une soirée que nous étions dans ce délire de tendresse, et que nous courions ensemble avec une agilité enfantine, mon père parut à mes yeux, et frémit. "Pourquoi," dit-il à Kalilah, "n'êtes vous pas dans la grande place à tirer de l'arc, ou dans le lieu ou on dompte les chevaux qui doivent vous porter au combat ? Faut-il que le soleil se lève, et se couche, en vous voyant flétrir comme un foible narcisse ? C'est en vain que les sages vous font des discours éloquens, qu'ils dévoilent à vos yeux les mystères de la docte antiquité—on vous raconte inutilement les faits guerriers et magnanimes ! Vous touchez à vôtre treizième année, et vous n'avez pas encore témoigné la moindre ambition de vous distinguer parmi les hommes. Ce n'est pas dans les réduits de la molesse que se forment les grands caractères—ce n'est point en lisant des poèmes amoureux qu'on se rend capable de gouverner les peuples. Les princes doivent agir—ils doivent se montrer. Réveillez-vous—cessez d'abuser de mon indulgence qui vous a laissé si longtems consumer vos heures avec Zulkaïs ; qu'elle se joue parmi les fleurs, la tendre et douce créature, mais ne la fréquentez plus depuis l'aube jusqu'au crépuscule—je vois bien que c'est elle qui vous pervertit."

En prononçant ces mots avec des gestes menaçants, Abou-Taher Achmed prit mon frère par le bras, et me laissa dans l'abîme de l'amertume. Un froid glaçant me saisit : quoique le soleil dardat ses rayons sur les eaux avec ferveur il me sembloit qu'il avoit disparu. Etendue par terre, je ne faisois que baiser les branches d'oranger fleuri que Kalilah avoit cueilli ; les dessins qu'il avoit tracés s'offrirent à ma vue, et redoublèrent mes pleurs. " Hélas ! " disois-je, " c'en est fait—nos heures fortunées ne reviendront plus ! Pourquoi m'accuser de pervertir Kalilah ! Quel mal puis-je lui faire ? Est-ce que notre bonheur affligeroit mon père ? Si c'étoit un crime d'être heureux, les sages nous en auroient avertis."

Ma nourrice Shamélah me trouva dans cet état de langueur et d'accablement. Pour dissiper mon chagrin, elle m'emmena tout de suite dans le bosquet où les jeunes filles s'amusoient à se cacher et à se poursuivre les unes les autres, parmi les volières dorées dont ce lieu étoit rempli. Je me sentis un peu soulagée par le chant des oiseaux et le murmure des clairs filets d'eau qui arrosoient le tronc des arbres ; mais quand l'heure fut venue où Kalilah avoit coutume de paroître, ces sons ne faisoient qu'augmenter mes souffrances.

Shamélah observa les palpitations de mon sein, elle me tira à l'écart, mit la main sur mon cœur, et me regarda fixement. Je rougissois, je palissois à vue d'œil. " Je vois bien," dit-elle, " que c'est l'absence de votre frère qui vous agite ainsi. C'est là le fruit de cet étrange éducation qu'on vous a donnée. La sainte lecture du Koran, l'observation des lois du prophète, la confiance en sa miséricorde d'Allah, calment comme le lait le bouillonnement du sang humain. Vous ne connoisez pas le doux plaisir d'élever vos pensées vers le ciel et de vous soumettre à ses décrets sans murmure. L'Emir, hélas ! veut tout prévenir, et il faut tout attendre. Séchez vos pleurs—peut-être Kalilah n'est pas malheureux quoiqu'il soit loin de vous."

" Ah ! " m'écriai-je, en l'interrompant avec un regard sinistre, " si je ne le croyois pas malheureux, je le serois bien plus moi-même." Shamélah trésaillit en m'entendant parler ainsi ; elle s'écria : " Plut au ciel qu'on eut suivi mes conseils et ceux de Shaban, et qu'au lieu de vous livrer au caprices des sages, on vous eut laissés comme les autres fidèles dans le repos d'une heureuse et paisible ignorance. L'ardeur de vos sensations me donne les plus vives alarmes. Elles commencent même à m'indigner. Soyez plus tranquille, et livrez votre âme aux innocents plaisirs que ce beau lieu vous offre, sans vous soucier si Kalilah les partage ou non. Son sexe est fait pour les exercices pénibles. Comment pourriez vous le suivre à la course, manier un arc, et lancer les cannes dans le jeu des Arabes ? Il doit se chercher des compagnons dignes de lui, et cesser de consumer ses beaux jours ici, auprès de vous, parmi ces bosquets et ces volières."

Ce sermon, loin de faire son effet, me mit hors de moi-même. Je tremblois de rage, et me levant comme une forcenée, je mis mon voile en dix milles pièces, et, me meurtrissant le sein, criai à haute voix que ma nourrice m'avoit maltraitée.

Les jeux cessèrent—on s'attroupa autour de moi, et quoique les princesses ne m'aimassent pas trop, parceque j'étois la sœur favorite de Kalilah, les larmes qui couloient avec mon sang excitèrent leur indignation contre Shamélah. Malheureusement pour la pauvre femme elle venoit d'imposer

des tâches rigoureuses à deux jeunes esclaves qui venoient de voler des grenades : ces deux petites vipères, pour se venger, temoignèrent contre elle, et appuyèrent tout ce que je disois. Elles coururent débiter tous ces mensonges à mon père, qui, n'ayant pas Shaban a ses côtés, et étant de bonne humeur avec nous parceque mon frère venoit de darder une javeline dans l'œil d'un crocodile, ordonna qu'on attacha Shamélah à un arbre, et qu'on la fouetta sans miséricorde.

Ses cris me percèrent l'âme : elle disoit sans cesse : " O vous que j'ai portée dans mes bras, que j'ai alaitée de mon sein—pouvez-vous me faire souffrir ainsi ? Disculpez-moi—déclarez la vérité. C'est seulement pour avoir tâché de vous sauver du noir abîme où vos inclinations fougueuses ne manqueront pas de vous précipiter que vous faites ainsi déchirer en pièces ce misérable corps ! "

J'allois demander grâce pour elle quand quelque démon m'inspira l'idée que c'étoit elle qui, conjointement avec Shaban, avoit mis en tête à mon père de faire un héros de Kalilah. Alors je me roidis contre tout sentiment d'humanité, et criai qu'on continuat à la frapper jusqu'à qu'elle fit l'aveu de son crime. Cette horrible scène fut enfin terminée par les ténèbres. On détacha la victime. Ses amis, et elle en avoit beaucoup, tachèrent de fermer ses blessures ; ils me demandèrent à genoux un baume souverain que j'avois, et que les sages avoient composé. Je le leur refusai. Shamélah fut mise à mes yeux sur un brancard,—on l'arrêta exprès devant moi. Ce sein sur lequel j'avois si souvent dormi ruisseloit de sang. A cet objet, au souvenir des tendres soins qu'elle avoit pris de mon enfance, je sentis mes entrailles s'émouvoir—je fondis en larmes, je me jettai par terre, je baisai la main qu'elle tendoit foiblement vers le monstre qu'elle avoit nourri, je courus chercher le baume, je l'appliquai moi-même en la suppliant de me pardonner, et en declarant ouvertement qu'elle étoit innocente et moi coupable.

Cet aveu fit frissonner tous ceux qui étoient autour de nous. On reculoit d'horreur à chaque exclamation que je faisois. Shamélah, quoiqu'à demi morte, s'en apperçut, et étouffa ses gémissemens avec le pan de sa robe pour ne pas augmenter mon désespoir et ses effets funestes ;—mais elle eut beau faire—tous s'enfuirent on me lançant des regards farouches. On emporta le brancard, et je me trouvai seule. La nuit étoit profondément obscure—des sons plaintifs sembloient sortir des cyprès dont ce lieu étoit ombragé. Saisie d'épouvante je m'égarai parmi le noir feuillage en proye au plus cuisans remords ;—un délire entier s'empara de mes sens, la terre paroissoit s'ouvrir devant mes pas, et je crus tomber dans un gouffre n'avoit point de fond. Mon âme étoit ainsi bouleversée quand, à travers les branches, je vis luire les flambeaux du cortège de mon père—j'observai qu'on s'arrêtoit—quelqu'un se détacha de la foule ;—un vif présentiment agita mon cœur—les pas s'avoisinèrent—et à la faveur d'une morne lueur semblable à celle qui règne ici, je vis Kalilah paroître devant moi.

" Chère Zulkaïs," s'écria-t-il, dans l'intervalle des baisers qu'il me donnoit, " j'ai passé un siècle sans vous voir, mais je l'ai employé à suivre les volontés de mon père. J'ai combattu un des monstres les plus formidables du fleuve ; mais que ne ferois-je pas quand on me propose pour récompense le bonheur de passer une soirée uniquement avec vous ! Allons—mettons ce tems à profit—ensevelissons nous dans ce bois ;—de notre retraite en-

tendons avec mépris le tumulte de leurs instrumens et de leurs danses. Je ferai servir le sorbet et les gâteaux sur la mousse qui borde la petite fontaine de porphyre—là je jouirai de vos regards et de votre entretien jusqu'à la pointe du jour. Alors—hélas ! je dois me replonger dans le vacarme du monde, darder les maudites cannes, et subir les interrgatoires des sages."

Kalilah me dit tout ceci avec une si grande rapidité que je ne pus l'interrompre. Je me laissai entraîner—nous perçames dans la feuillée jusqu'à la fontaine. Le souvenir de ce que Shamélah m'avoit dit sur ma tendresse extrême pour mon frère avoit, en dépit de moi-même, fait une grande impression sur moi. J'étois prête à retirer ma main de celle de Kalilah, quand à la lueur des lampions qu'on avoit alumés sur la marge de la fontaine, je vis son charmant visage réfléchi dans les eaux—je vis ses grands yeux moites de tendresse, et sentis ses regards au fond de mon cœur. Tous mes projets de réforme, toute mon agonie de remords firent place à une fermentation bien différente—je me laissai aller par terre auprès de Kalilah, et appuyant ma tête sur son sein, donnai un libre cours à mes larmes. Kalilah, me voyant si éplorée, me demanda vivement la cause. Je lui racontai tout ce qui s'étoit passé entre moi et Shamélah, sans omettre la moindre circonstance. Son âme fut d'abord émue par la peinture que je lui faisois de ses souffrances ;—un moment après il s'ecria : " Qu'elle périsse l'officieuse esclave ! Faut-il toujours qu'on s'oppose aux plus douces inclinations du cœur ! Comment pourrions-nous ne pas nous aimer, Zulkaïs ? La nature que nous a fait naître ensemble, ne nous a-t-elle pas donné les mêmes goûts, la même ardeur dans les sensations ? Mon père et ses sages ne nous ont-ils pas fait partager la vertu des mêmes bains ? Qui pourra blâmer une sympathie que tout a produit ? Non, Zulkaïs, Shaban et notre superstitieuse nourrice ont beau dire : ce n'est point un crime de nous aimer ; le crime seroit si nous souffrirons lâchement d'être séparés l'un de l'autre ! Jurons—non par le prophète que nous ne connoissons guères, mais par les élémens qui soutiennent l'existence humaine—jurons, que plutôt que de consentir à vivre l'un sans l'autre, nous ferons couler dans nos veines ce doux breuvage de fleurs aquatiques dont les sages nous ont parlé. Cette liqueur, qui doit nous assoupir sans peine dans les bras l'un de l'autre, livrera imperceptiblement nos âmes à la prix d'une autre existence.

Ces paroles me calmerent entièrement—je repris ma gaieté ordinaire—nous folatrâmes ensemble. " Je serai bien vaillant demain," disoit Kalilah, " pour avoir encore de tels momens, car ce n'est qu'à ce prix que mon père peut me soumettre à ses fantaisies."

" Ah ah ! " s'ecria Abou-Taher Achmed, en sortant de derrière un des buissons où il nous avoit écouté, " c'est donc là votre résolution ! Nous verrons si vous la tiendrez ;—vous êtes assez récompensé ce soir du peu que vous avez fait aujourd'hui—retirez-vous . . . et vous Zulkaïs—allez pleurer la faute énorme que vous avez commise contre Shamélah." Tout consternés nous nous jetâmes à ses pieds, mais, nous tournant le dos, il ordonna aux eunuques de nous conduire chacun dans notre appartement.

Ce n'étoit d'aucun scrupule sur la vivacité de notre tendresse que l'Emir étoit agité. Il n'avoit qu'un seul but—c'étoit de voir son fils devenir un formidable guerrier et un puissant prince : les moyens ne lui étoient de rien. Il voyoit que je pouvois lui servir d'instrument ; le danger d'attiser

notre passion par des difficultés et des complaisances alternatives ne l'arrêtoit pas ; mais ces momens de désœuvrement et de volupté trop fréquens ne pouvoient que dérouter ses desseins. Il falloit prendre un parti plus violent et plus décidé, et malheureusement il le prit. Hélas ! sans toutes ces précautions, sans tous ces projets, sans toutes ces prévoyances, nous serions restés dans l'innocence, et nous n'aurions jamais vu l'horreur de ce lieu de supplice.

L'Emir étant rentré chez lui, fit appeller Shaban et lui fit part de la résolution qu'il avoit prise de nous séparer pendant un certain tems. Le prudent eunuque se prosterna aussitôt la face contre terre, puis se relevant. " Que mon seigneur me pardonne," lui dit-il, " si son esclave n'est point de son avis ; ne détachez pas sur cette flamme naissante le vent de l'absence ou elle s'élèvera en des tourbillons que vous ne pourrez vaincre. Vous connoissez l'impétueux caractère du prince—sa sœur n'a que trop aujourd'hui donné des preuves du sien. Laissez-les ensemble sans contradiction—abandonnez-les à leur penchant enfantin, ils se lasseront bientôt l'un de l'autre, et Kalilah, dégoûté de la monotonie d'un harem, vous demandera à genoux de l'en tirer."—" As-tu fini de débiter tes sottises ? " interrompit impatiemment l'Emir. " Ah ! que tu connois peu le génie de Kalilah. Je l'ai bien étudié moi—j'ai vu que les opérations mysterieuses de mes sages n'ont pas été vaines. Il ne peut donc rien faire avec indifférence ; si je le laisse avec Zulkaïs, il s'anéantira dans la mollesse—si je l'éloigne d'elle, et que de la revoir soit le prix des grandes choses que j'exigerai de lui, il n'est rien dont il ne soit capable. Qu'importe le radotage des docteurs de notre loi s'il est ce que je veux qu'il soit ? Sache d'ailleurs, eunuque, que quand une fois il aura goûté des charmes de l'ambition, l'idée de Zulkaïs se dissipera comme une légère vapeur dans les rayons du soleil de la gloire. Ainsi, entre demain dans la chambre de Zulkaïs—préviens son reveil, enveloppe la bien dans ses robes, et transporte la avec ses esclaves, et tout ce qui est nécessaire à l'agrément de la vie, sur une barque qui sera prête à te recevoir sur le Nil. Suis la navigation de ce fleuve pendant vingt-neuf jours ; le trentième vous débarquerez dans l'île des Autruches. Loge la princesse dans le palais que j'ai fait bâtir pour les sages qui errent dans ces déserts parmi de savantes ruines. Il s'y en trouvera un qui s'appelle le Grimpeur des Palmiers, parcequ'il fait ses contemplations du haut de ces arbres. Celui-la sait une infinité d'histoires, et il aura soin de désennuyer Zulkaïs ; car je sais bien qu'après Kalilah, elle est folle de contes."

Shaban connoissoit trop bien son maître pour oser s'opposer plus long-tems à ses volontés. Il alla donner ses ordres en secouant la tête, et faisant de gros soupirs. Il ne goûtoit point du tout ce voyage à l'île des Autruches, et s'étoit formé une idée peu favorable du Grimpeur des Palmiers ; car, en fidèle Musulman, il avoit en antipathie les sages et leur prouesses de tout genre.

Tout ne fut que trop vite préparé. Les agitations de la veille m'avoient si fort fatiguée que je dormois profondément. On me tira si doucement du lit, on me transporta avec tant d'adresse que je ne m'éveillai qu'à quatre lieues du Caire. D'abord le bruit des eaux autour de notre barque commença à m'alarmer—il remplissoit mes oreilles d'une manière si étrange que j'allai m'imaginer avoir bu le breuvage dont Kalilah m'avoit parlé, et être transportée au delà des bornes de notre planète. Mon esprit étoit si étourdi

par toutes ces idées bizarres, que je n'osois ouvrir les yeux, mais j'étendis les bras pour chercher Kalilah. Je le croyois à mes côtés. Jugez du tresaillement que je dus éprouver quand, au lieu de toucher ses membres délicats, j'empoignai la main écailleuse d'un eunuque qui conduisoit la barque, et qui étoit encore plus vieux et plus rébarbatif que Shaban. Je me lève sur mon séant, et pousse des cris. J'ouvre les yeux : je vois une vaste étendue de ciel et d'eau terminée par un rivage bleuâtre. Le soleil brilloit en plein ; le firmament azuré inspiroit la joye à toute la nature ; mille oiseaux aquatiques se jouoient autour de nous parmi les nénuphars que notre barque rasoit à chaque instant ;—leurs grosses fleurs jaunes reluisoient comme l'or, et exhaloient un doux parfum ; mais tous ces objets agréables furent perdus pour moi, et au lieu de me réjouir le cœur, ne firent que porter dans mon âme une sombre mélancolie.

En regardant autour de moi, je vis mes esclaves désolées, et Shaban qui, d'un air mécontent et magistral, leur imposoit silence. Le nom de Kalilah venoit à chaque instant sur mes lèvres—enfin je le prononçai et demandai, les larmes aux yeux, où il étoit, et ce qu'on prétendoit faire de moi. Shaban, au lieu de me repondre, ordonna à ses eunuques de redoubler d'activité, et d'entonner un certain air égyptien en cadence avec leurs rames. Le maudit chœur s'éleva avec tant de véhémence qu'il acheva de me tourner la tête. Nous fendions les flots comme une flèche. C'étoit en vain que je les suppliois de s'arrêter, ou du moins de me dire où j'allois. Les barbares étoient sourds à mes prières ; plus j'en faisois, plus ils renforçoient leur détestable chant pour ne pas m'entendre. Shaban, avec sa voix cassée, faisoit plus de bruit que tous les autres.

Rien ne peut exprimer les tourmens que je ressentois, et l'horreur que j'éprouvois de me trouver si loin de Kalilah au milieu du redoutable Nil ! Mon effroi augmenta à la nuit tombante. Je vis le soleil se perdre dans les eaux avec un serrement de cœur inexprimable—sa lumière en mille sillons trembloit sur leur surface. Je me ressouviens des momens paisibles que javois à de telles heures passés avec Kalilah, et cachant ma tête dans mon voile, je me livrai à ma douleur.

Bientôt un doux frémissement se fit sentir—notre barque couloit parmi des roseaux. Un grand silence avoit succédé au chant des rameurs, car Shaban étoit descendu à terre. Il revint dans peu de momens, et me porta sous une tente qu'on avoit dressée à quelques pas du rivage. J'y trouvai des lumières, des matelats étendus par terre, une table couverte de quelques mets, et un enorme Koran qu'on y avoit déployé. Je détestois ce saint livre—je ne l'avois jamais lu avec Kalilah,—ainsi je le poussai avec mépris à terre, car les sages l'avoient souvent tourné en ridicule, Shaban s'avisa de me gronder, et je lui sautai au visage pour lui imposer silence. Ce moyen me réussit, et ne perdit pas son efficacité pendant toute ma longue navigation, dont la marche fut semblable à celle du premier jour—sans cesse des nénuphars, des oiseaux, et une infinité de chaloupes qui alloient et venoient avec des marchandises.

Enfin nous commençames à abandonner le plat pays. Comme, ainsi que les malheureux qui cherchent toujours quelque chose, j'avois continuellement les yeux fixés sur l'horizon, un soir je vis s'y élever des masses beaucoup plus hautes, et d'une forme beaucoup plus variée que les pyramides. C'étoit des montagnes. Leur aspect m'en imposa ; la terrifiante

pensée me vint dans l'esprit que mon père vouloit m'evoyer au triste pays du roi des nègres pour m'offrir aux idoles que les sages prétendoient être très friands de princesses. Shaban, qui s'aperçut de ce redoublement d'agitation, eut enfin pitié de moi, et m'informa de ma destination ; il ajouta que quoi qu'on voulut me séparer de Kalilah, ce n'étoit pas pour toujours, et qu'en attendant je ferois connoissance avec un homme merveilleux qu'on appelloit le Grimpeur des Palmiers, et qui étoit le meilleur conteur de l'univers.

Ces nouvelles me calmèrent un peu. L'espérance, quoiqu'éloignée, de revoir Kalilah versoit du baume dans mon sang, et je n'étois pas fâchée d'apprendre que j'aurois des contes à plaisir. D'ailleurs l'idée d'un endroit aussi solitaire que l'île des Autruchess flattoit mon esprit romanesque. Si je devois être éloignée de celui que le chérissois plus que la vie, j'aimois mieux subir ce sort dans des lieux sauvages que dans l'éclat et le tintamarre d'un harem. Loin de ces impertinences je contois livrer toute mon âme aux doux ressouvenirs du passé, et donner un libre cours aux langoureuses rêveries qui me retraçeroient l'image de mon Kalilah.

Occupée de ces projets, je voyois nonchalamment approcher notre barque de plus en plus le pays des montagnes. Les rochers gagnoient des deux côtés sur le fleuve, et sembloient me devoir bientôt priver de la vue du ciel. Je vis des arbres d'une hauteur démesurée, dont les racines entortillées ensemble pendoient dans le Nil. J'entendis le bruit des cataractes, et vis l'écume des gros bouillons qu'elles formoient remplir l'air d'un brouillard délié comme une gaze d'argent. A travers cette espèce de voile, j'apperçus enfin une petite île verte, où des autruches se promenoient gravement. En allant toujours, je découvris un édifice en dôme adossé à une colline toute couverte de nids. Ce palais avoit l'air tout à fait étrange —aussi avoit-il été bâti par un fameux cabaliste. Ses murailles d'un marbre jaunâtre luisoient comme du métal poli, et réflechissoient les objets en leur prêtant une grandeur gigantesque. Je frissonnai en voyant la figure que faisoient là les autruches—leurs cols sembloient se perdre dans les nues, et leurs yeux brilloient comme d'énormes boulets rougis dans la flamme. Mes craintes furent observées par Shaban, qui me fit comprendre la vertu amplifiante des murailles, et m'assura que quand même les oiseaux seroient en effet aussi monstrueux qu'ils me le paroissoient, je pouvois m'en reposer sur leurs bonnes manières, car le Grimpeur des Palmiers travailloit depuis près de cent ans à les rendre d'une douceur exemplaire. A peine m'avoit-il donné cette information, que je mis pied à terre sur un gazon frais et verdoyant. Mille fleurs inconnues, mille coquilles bizarres, mille limaçons baroques paroient le rivage. L'ardeur du soleil étoit tempérée par la rosée perpetuelle qui provenoit des chutes d'eaux dont le bruit monotone m'inclinoit au sommeil.

Me sentant appesantie, j'ordonnai qu'on jette un auvent sur un des palimers dont ce lieu étoit rempli, car le grand Grimpeur qui portoit toujours à sa ceinture les clefs du palais, étoit à faire ses méditations à l'autre bout de l'île.

Pendant qu'un doux assoupissement s'empara de mes sens, Shaban courut présenter au sage les lettres de mon père. On fut obligé de les attacher à une longue perche, car il étoit au sommet d'un palmier haut de cinquante coudées, et n'en vouloit pas descendre sans savoir pourquoi.

Aussitôt qu'il eut parcouru ces fuilles, il les porta respectueusement à son front, et se glissa en bas comme un météore ; aussi bien en avoit-il la mine, car ses yeux étoient flamboyants, et son nez d'un beau rouge sanguin.

Shaban fut tout affarouché de cette vélocité,—de voir le vieillard à terre sain et sauf, et surtout de l'entendre lui demander de le charger sur son dos, parceque, disoit-il, il ne s'abaissoit jamais à marcher. L'eunuque, qui n'aimoit ni les sages ni leurs caprices, et qui les regardoit comme le fléau de la famille de l'Emir, hesita un moment, mais réfléchissant sur les ordres positifs qu'on lui avoit donnés, il vainquit sa répugnance, et le prit sur ses épaules, en disant : "Hélas ! le bon hermite Abou-Gabdolle Guehaman n'en eut pas usé ainsi, et il en auroit mieux valu la peine !" Le Grimpeur, indigné de ces mots, car il avoit eu des démêlés pieux avec l'hermite du Desert de Sable, lui lança un grand coup de pied dans le dos, et lui fourra son nez brulant au milieu du visage. Shaban broncha, mais continua son chemin sans proférer une syllabe. J'étois toujours endormie ;—il s'approcha de ma couche, et jettant sa charge à mes pieds, me dit d'une voix qui n'eut pas de peine à m'éveiller : "Voilá le Grimpeur—que grand bien vous en fasse !" A la vue d'une telle figure, je ne pus, malgré ma tristesse, m'empêcher de faire un éclat de rire. Le vieillard ne perdit pourtant point contenance, il fit résonner ses clefs d'un air important, et dit d'un ton grave à Shaban : "Reprenez-moi sur votre dos—allons au palais que j'ouvre des portes qui n'ont jamais admis de femelles que ma grande pondeuse, reine des autruches." Je suivis—il étoit tard. Ces grands oiseaux descendoient des collines, et nous entourant par troupes, becquetoient le gazon et les arbres. Le bruit que faisoient leurs becs étoit tel que je crus entendre les pieds d'une armée entière. Enfin je me trouvai devant les murailles luisantes. Quoique j'en connusse l'artifice leur figure m'épouvanta ainsi que celle du Grimpeur sur les épaules de Shaban.

Nous entrâmes dans un lieu voûté, dont les lambris de marbre noir semé d'étoiles d'or inspiroient une sorte de terreur, que les plaisantes grimaces du vieillard adoucissoient un peu. Je respirois un air étouffé, qui me donna au cœur. Le Grimpeur s'en apperçut ; il fit allumer un grand feu, et y jetta dedans une petite boule d'aromates qu'il tira de son sein. Aussitôt une vapeur assez agréable quoique bien pénétrante se répandit de tous côtés. L'eunuque s'enfuit en éternuant ; quant à moi, je m'approchai du feu, et remuant tristement la braise, je me mis à y former les chiffres de Kalilah. Le Grimpeur me laissoit faire ; il louoit l'éducation que j'avois reçue, et approuvoit fort les bains qu'on m'avoit donnés, ajoutant malicieusement qu'il n'y a rien qui aiguise l'esprit autant qu'une passion un peu extraordinaire. "Je vois bien," continua-t-il, "que vous êtes absorbée dans des réflexions intéressantes—cela me plait ;—j'avois cinq sœurs—nous nous moquions de Mahomet en nous aimant avec assez de vivacité. Je m'en souviens encore avec plaisir au bout de cent ans, car on n'oublie guère les premières impressions. Cette constance m'a fort recommandé aux Ginns dont je suis le favori. Si vous savez, ainsi que moi, persévérer dans vos sentimens, ils pourront bien faire quelque chose pour vous. En attendant, confiez vous à moi—je ne serai pas un gardien farouche ;—n'allez pas imaginer que je dépende de fantaisies de votre père qui, ayant des vues bornées, préfère l'ambition au plaisir. Je suis plus heureux avec mes palmiers, mes autruches, et mes douces méditations que

lui au milieu de son divan et de sa grandeur. Je ne dis pas que vous ne puissiez augmenter les agrémens de ma vie ; plus vous serez complaisante envers moi, plus je serai poli envers vous, et plus je vous apprendrai de belles choses. Si vous paroissez vous plaire dans cette solitude, vous vous ferez une grande réputation de sagesse, et je sais par moi-même que sous le couvercle d'un grand nom on peut cacher un trésor d'extravagances. Votre père m'a écrit toute votre histoire : pendant qu'on vous croira attentive à mes instructions, vous m'entretiendrez de votre Kalilah tant que vous voudrez sans que je m'en fâche ;—au contraire, il n'est rien qui me fasse plus de plaisir que d'observer les mouvemens d'un cœur qui se livre à ses jeunes inclinations, et de voir le vif coloris d'un premier amour se répandre sur les joues." A cet étrange discours je tenois les yeux baissés, mais l'oiseau de l'espérance voltigeoit dans mon cœur. Enfin j'envisageai mon sage, et son grand nez luisant, qui brilloit comme un point lumineux au milieu de tout ce marbre noir, ne me parut plus si désagréable. Ce regard fut accompagné d'un sourire si significatif que le Grimpeur vit bien que j'avois saisie l'amorce qu'il m'avoit présentée. Il en eut une telle joye qu'oubliant sa savante paresse, il courut préparer lui-même un repas dont j'avois grand besoin.

A peine étoit-il parti, que Shaban rentra, tenant à la main une lettre cachetée du sceau de mon père, et qu'il venoit d'ouvrir. " Voici," me dit-il, " des instructions que je ne devois lire qu'ici, et que je n'ai que trop lues. Hélas ! qu'on est malheureux d'être l'esclave d'un prince à qui les sciences ont tourné la tête. Infortunée princesse ! je suis malgré moi obligé de vous abandonner. Je dois me rembarquer avec tous ceux qui nous ont suivis ici, et n'y laisser pour vous servir que la boiteuse, sourde et muette Mouzaka. Le vilain Grimpeur sera votre unique ressource—le ciel sait ce que vous gagnerez avec lui. L'Emir le regarde comme un prodige de savoir et de sagesse, mais il permettra à un fidèle musulman d'en douter." En disant ces mots Shaban toucha trois fois la lettre de son front, puis faisant un saut en arrière, disparut à mes yeux. La manière hideuse dont le pauvre eunuque pleuroit en me quittant m'amusa beaucoup. Je n'avois garde de tâcher de l'arrêter—sa présence m'étoit odieuse, car il évitoit toujours de m'entretenir du seul objet qui remplissoit mon âme. D'un autre côté j'étois enchantée du choix qu'on avoit fait de Mouzaka : avec une esclave sourde et muette, j'avois une pleine liberté de faire mes confidences à l'obligeant vieillard, et de suivre ses avis en cas qu'il m'en donna quelqu'un de mon goût. Toutes mes pensées prenoient ainsi une teinte assez agréable, quand le Grimpeur revint, affublé de tapis et de coussins de soie qu'il étendit par terre, et se mit d'un air leste et content à allumer des flambeaux, et à brûler des pastilles dans des cassolettes d'or. Il venoit de prendre ces beaux meubles dans le trésor du palais qui méritoit bien, disoit-il, d'exciter ma curiosité. Je l'assurai que je l'en croyois sur sa parole dans ce moment, car l'odeur des excellents mets qui l'avoient précéde avoit agréablement aiguilloné mon appétit. Ces mets consistoient principalement en tranches de chevreuil aux herbes fragrantes, en œufs accommodés de plusieurs manières et en gâteaux plus déliés que les feuilles d'une rose blanche. Dans des étranges coquilles transparentes étoit une liqueur vermeille, composée du jus de dattes qui pétilloit comme les yeux du Grimpeur.

Nous nous mimes très amicalement à manger : mon bizarre gardien vanta beaucoup son vin, et en fit bon usage au grand étonnement de Mouzaka, qui, tapie dans un coin, faisoit des gestes inconcevables que le marbre poli nous rendoit de tous côtés. Le feu brûloit gaiement, et jettoit des étincelles, qui en s'éteignant répandoient un parfum exquis. Les flambeaux donnoient une vive lumière, les cassolettes rayonnoient, et la douce chaleur qui régnoit en ce lieu nourrissoit une voluptueuse indolence.

Je trouvois ma situation si singulière, la sorte de prison où j'étois si différente de tout ce que j'aurois pu imaginer, et les allures de mon concierge si grotesques, que de tems en tems je me frottois les yeux pour m'assurer si tout cela n'étoit pas un songe. J'y aurois même trouvé de l'amusement, si l'idée que j'étois si loin de Kalilah m'avoit laissée en repos un seule instant. Le Grimpeur, pour me dissiper, commença l'histoire merveilleuse du géant Gébir et de l'artificieuse Charode, mais je l'interrompis en le priant d'écouter le récit de mes malheurs rééls, et lui promis qu'en suite je donnerai mon attention à ses contes. Hélas ! je ne lui ai jamais tenu parole : il eut beau, à plusieurs reprises, tâcher d'exciter ma curiosité, je n'en avois que pour Kalilah, et je ne cessois de répéter, "Où est-il ? que fait-il ? quand le reverrai-je ? "

Le vieillard, voyant que j'étois si décidée dans ma passion, et que j'avois si bien bravé tous remords, fut convaincu que j'étois un objet propre à remplir ses vues ; car mes auditeurs comprennent sans doute qu'il étoit le serviteur du souverain de ce lieu de supplice. Dans la perversité de son âme, et dans ce fatal aveuglement qui fait désirer d'obtenir une place ici, il avoit voué de conduire à Eblis vingt malheureux, et il lui falloit précisément mon frère et moi pour compléter ce nombre. Il étoit donc bien éloigné d'arrêter le cours des épanchements de mon cœur, et quoique, pour attiser le feu qui me dévoroit, il sembla de tems en tems avoir envie de faire ses contes, il avoit bien autre chose en tête.

Une grande partie de la nuit s'écoula dans ces aveux criminels : vers le matin je m'endormis. Le Grimpeur en fit autant à quelques pas de moi—après m'avoir, sans cérémonie, appliqué un baiser sur le front, qui me brûla comme un fer chaud. Mes rêves furent très lugubres ; je n'en ai qu'une idée confuse, mais autant que je puis me les rappeler c'étoient des avertissements du ciel qui vouloit encore m'ouvrir la porte du salut.

A peine le soleil fut-il levé, que le Grimpeur me mena dans ses bois, me fit faire connoissance avec les autruches, et me donna ensuite le spectacle de son agilité surnaturelle. Non seulement il montoit jusqu'au sommets tremblants des palmiers les plus hauts et les plus menus, et les plioit sous ses pieds comme des épis, mais encore il se dardoit d'arbre en arbre comme une flèche. Après plusieurs de ces tours de soulpesse, il se fixa sur une branche, me dit qu'il alloit faire ses méditations, et me conseilla d'aller avec Mouzaka me baigner dans des bassins que je trouverois sur le bord du fleuve de l'autre côté de la colline.

La chaleur étoit excessive, je trouvai ces claires eaux fraîches et délicieuses. Leur réservoir revêtu d'un marbre précieux étoit creusé au milieu d'un petit pré sur lequel de hauts rochers jettoient leur ombre ; des pâles narcisses et des glaïeuls croissoient sur cette marge humide, et se penchant du côté de l'onde se balançoient sur ma tête ; j'aimois ces fleurs languissantes—elles étoient l'emblème de mon état, et je laissai pendant plusieurs

heures leur parfum enivrer mon âme. De retour au palais je trouvai que le Grimpeur avoit fait de grands apprêts pour me régaler. La soirée se passa comme celle de la veille, et ainsi à peu près s'écoulerent quatre mois. Je ne saurois appeler ce tems bien malheureux. Cette solitude romanesque, la complaisante attention que mon vieillard donnoit à mon délire perpétuel, et la patience avec laquelle il entendoit ces folles répétitions que l'amour dicté, tout sembloit se réunir pour soulager mes peines. J'aurois peut-être passé des années entières dans ces douces illusions de l'âme, dont la réalité n'approche que rarement, j'aurois peut-être vu s'amortir l'ardeur de ma passion, je serois, peut-être, devenue seulement la tendre sœur et l'amie de Kalilah, si les extravagans projets de mon père ne m'avoient pas livré à l'impie scélérat qui me guettoit comme sa proie. Ah! Shaban! Ah! Shamélah! Ah! mes véritables amis! Pourquoi fus-je arrachée de vos bras! Pourquoi ne vous aperçutes-vous pas dès le commencement de ce germe de tendresse trop vive qui étoit dans nos cœurs, et qu'il falloit alors étouffer—puisqu'un jour on devoit employer le fer et le feu pour l'extirper?

Un matin que j'étois abimée dans mes tristes réflexions, et que j'exprimois avec plus de violence qu'à l'ordinaire mon désespoir d'être séparée de Kalilah, le vieillard, fixant sur moi ses yeux perçants, m'adressa ces mots:

"Princesse, vous qui avez été instruite par les sages les plus illuminés, vous n'ignorez pas, sans doute, qu'il existe des intelligences supérieures à notre espèce, qui se mêlent de nos affaires, et pouvent nous tirer des pas les plus difficiles. Moi qui vous parle ai fait plus d'une fois l'expérience de leur pouvoir; j'avois des droits à leur assistance, car, comme vous, on me mit en naissant sous leur protection. Je le vois—vous ne pouvez plus vivre séparée de votre Kalilah; il est donc tems de vous adresser à ces esprits secourables, mais aurez-vous assez de fermeté, assez de courage, pour soutenir l'abord d'un de ces êtres si différents de l'homme? Je sais que leur approche produit des effets inévitables—le tressaillement des entrailles, la révolution du sang qui remonte contre son cours ordinaire, mais je sais aussi que cette terreur, ces mouvemens convulsifs, tout pénibles qu'ils sont, doivent paroitre peu de chose à qui a connu les mortelles langueurs que fait éprouver la privation d'un objet uniquement chéri. Si vous vous résolvez à invoquer à votre aide la Ginne de la grande pyramide, que je sais avoir presidé à votre naissance, si vous voulez vous livrer à ses soins, je puis, dès ce soir, vous faire parler à son frère, qui est plus votre voisin que vous ne pensez. Cet être, si renommé parmi nos sages, se nomme Omoultakos; il est à present l'esprit gardien du trésor que les anciens rois cabalistes ont placé dans ce désert. Au moyen des autres esprits qu'il commande, il entretient une intime correspondance avec sa sœur, que, par parenthèse, il a aimée en son tems comme vous aimez actuellement Kalilah. Il entrera donc aussi vivement que moi dans vos souffrances, et je ne doute point qu'il ne fasse tout pour vous."

A ces dernières paroles la palpitation de mon cœur fut inexprimable;—je saisie la possibilité de revoir Kalilah avec un transport qui me fit lever brusquement de ma place, et courir comme une forcenée par la chambre; puis revenant au vieillard, je l'embrassai, l'appellai mon père, me jettai à ses genoux, et le suppliai, les mains jointes, de ne pas différer mon bonheur,

et de me conduire, à quelque hazard que ce pût être, au sanctuaire d'Omoultakos.

Le rusé scélérat voyoit d'un œil malin et content le délire où il m'avoit mise, et ne songeoit qu'à le porter à son comble. A cet effet, il prit tout d'un coup un air froid et réservé, et me dit d'un ton solennel: "Sachez, Zulkaïs, que j'ai mes doutes, et ne puis m'empêcher d'hésiter dans une affaire si importante, quelqu'envie que j'aie de vous servir. Vous ignorez combien la demarche, que vous êtes si empressée de faire, est hardie, ou du moins vous n'en concevez pas assez toute la témérité. Je ne sais comment vous pourrez supporter l'effroyable solitude où il faudra que vous vous trouviez sous des voûtes immenses, et l'appareil étrange du lieu où je dois vous conduire. Je ne sais pas non plus dans quelle forme le Ginn vous apparoîtra. Je l'ai vu souvent sous un aspect si épouventable que mes sens en ont été longtems engourdis;—d'autres fois il s'est montré sous des apparences si bizarres que j'ai manqué étouffer de rire, car rien n'est si capricieux que ces sortes d'êtres. Celui-ci ménagera peut-être votre foiblesse, mais il faut vous avertir que l'épreuve est très périlleuse, que le tems de l'appartion est incertain, qu'en l'attendant il ne vous faudra témoigner ni effroi, ni horreur, ni impatience,—et vous garder bien à sa vue ou de rire, ou de pleurer. Observez encore que vous devez attendre dans le silence et l'immobilité de la mort, et les mains croisées sur la poitrine, qu'il vous parle le premier, car un geste, un sourire ou un gémissement, causeroient non seulement votre perte, mais aussi celle de Kalilah, et la mienne."—"Tout ce que vous me dites," répondis-je, "porte l'effroi dans mon âme, mais de quoi n'est-on pas capable quand un amour si fatal que le mien nous excite?" —"Je vous félicite de votre sublime persévérance," reprit le Grimpeur avec un sourire, dont je ne compris pas alors toute la méchanceté. "Preparez-vous. Aussitôt que les ténèbres auront couvert la terre, j'irai suspendre Mouzaka à un de mes hauts palmiers, afin qu'elle ne soit pas dans notre chemin; en suite je vous conduirai à la porte de la galerie qui mène au reduit d'Omoultakos; je vous y laisserai, et irai, selon ma coutume, méditer sur la cime de mes arbres, et faire des vœux pour le succès de votre entreprise."

Je passai l'intervalle du tems dans un tremblement continuel; j'errois au hazard dans les vallons, et sur les petites collines de l'île; je fixois mes yeux sur le profond des eaux; je voyois les rayons du soleil s'affoiblir sur leur surface en désirant et redoutant également qu'il disparut de notre hémisphère. Le calme sacré d'une soirée sereine se répandit enfin partout. Je vis le Grimpeur se détacher du troupeau de ses autruches qui s'acheminoient gravement pour boire dans le fleuve; il venoit à moi à pas comptés, et mettant le doigt sur la bouche, me dit: "Suivez-moi en silence." J'obeïs. Il ouvrit une porte, et me fit entrer avec lui dans un étroit passage, dont la voûte n'étant qu'à quatre pieds de haut m'obligeoit de marcher à demi courbée. Je respirois un air humide et étouffé; je m'entortillois à chaque pas dans des plantes viscueuses qui sortoient des crevasses par lesquelles on recevoit la foible clarté des rayons de la lune. Ce luminaire donnoit de tems en tems à plomb sur des petits puits rangés à droite et à gauche. A travers ces noires eaux, je crus voir des reptiles avec la face humaine. Je détournai les yeux avec horreur; je brûlois d'envie de demander ce que c'étoit au Grimpeur, mais son air renfrogné et pensif

m'en imposa ; il sembloit s'avancer avec peine en écartant quelque chose, que je ne voyois pas, avec les mains. Bientôt je cessai de le voir lui-même ; nous tournoions dans une obscurité totale, et je fus obligée de le tenir par sa robe pour ne pas le perdre dans cet affreux labyrinthe. Nous arrivâmes enfin dans un endroit où je commençai à réspirer un air plus libre et plus frais. Un seul cierge d'une grandeur énorme, planté dans un bloc de marbre, éclairoit ce vaste lieu, et me découvrit cinq escaliers dont les rampes de différens métaux se perdoient dans l'obscurité. Là, nous nous arretâmes, et le vieillard rompit le silence en me disant : "Choisissez entre ces escaliers : un seul d'entre eux doit vous conduire au trésor d'Omoul-takos,—des autres qui s'égarent dans l'édifice, vous ne reviendriez jamais—vous n'y trouveriez que la faim, et les ossemens de ceux qu'elle y a consumés." Après ces mots, il disparut, et j'entendis une porte se fermer entre lui et moi.

Jugez de ma terreur, O vous qui avez entendu tourner sur ses gonds le portail d'ébène qui nous renferme à jamais dans ce lieu de souffrance ! J'ose le dire, ma situation étoit, s'il se peut, plus cruelle encore, car j'étois seule. Je tombai par terre au pied du bloc de marbre. Un sommeil semblable à celui qui finit notre existence matérielle s'empara de mes sens. Soudainement une voix claire, douce, insinuante comme celle de Kalilah, flatta mes oreilles : je crus en songe le voir sur un des escaliers qui avoit une rampe d'airain. Un guerrier majestueux, dont le front pâle étoit ceint d'un diadème, le tenoit par la main. "Zulkaïs," me dit-il d'un air affligé, "Allah proscrit notre amour,—mais Eblis, que tu vois ici, le protège ;—implore son secours, et suis la route qu'il te trace."

Je me réveille avec un transport de courage, me saisis du flambeau, et sans hésiter commence à monter l'escalier à la rampe d'airain. Les degrés sembloient se multiplier sous mes pas,—mais ma résolution ne m'abandonnant point, je parvins enfin à une chambre carée et immensément spacieuse, pavée d'un marbre couleur de chair parfaitement par ses veines, les artères du corps humain. Les murailles de ce lieu d'effroi étoient cachées par des piles de tapis de mille espèces et couleurs, lesquels faisoient un mouvement lent, comme si des gens étouffés sous leur poids les avoient soulevés. Partout étoient rangés des coffres noirs, dont les cadenas moitié acier paroissoient être incrustés de sang.

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A GLANCE at the names of the contributors and of the subjects treated in the "English Review" should be sufficient to assure the reader that the Directors of the Review have succeeded in carrying out the aims with which they started. The "English Review" differs from its contemporaries in the fact that it is mainly concerned with the better class of literature and the more advanced forms of thought. It thus competes in no way with any review now existing; on the contrary, it supplements them all. For it is safe to say that no educated man or woman can, if they wish to be abreast of modern thought, afford to neglect the "English Review." Its contemporaries deal mostly with facts political and contemporary. The "English Review" deals almost entirely with thought which is neither of to-day alone, nor solely of to-morrow. It has attempted to gather within its covers the most intimate writings of the best authors of the day, both in England and on the Continent. It has attempted to put before the public the works of authors at present unknown, but of authors who, in the view of its Directors, may be expected to carry on the thought of to-morrow. Seeing the standard to which the "English Review" has attained, and the level at which it will continue to be conducted, the Directors have no hesitation in assuring the public that it is the duty of thinking men to give the "English Review" their suffrages, not because they will be supporting a periodical, but because they will be aiding in giving expression to much contemporary thought which would otherwise with difficulty find a place for expression.

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"There is another reason why Shakespeare is more interesting to us than the greatest men of the past, than Dante even, or Homer; for Dante and Homer worked only at their best in the flower of manhood. Shakespeare, on the other hand, has painted himself for us in his green youth with hardly any knowledge of life or art, and then in his eventful maturity, with growing experience and new powers, in masterpiece after masterpiece; and at length in his decline with weakened grasp and fading colours, so that in him we can study the growth and fruiting and decay of the finest spirit that has yet been born among men. This tragedy of tragedies, in which "Lear" is only one scene—this rise to intensest life and widest vision and fall through abysms of despair and madness to exhaustion and death—can be followed, experience by experience, from Stratford to London and its thirty years of passionate living, and then from London to village Stratford again, and the eternal shrouding silence."

But let us follow Mr. Harris's steps from the beginning. He takes "Hamlet" as Shakespeare's deepest psychological study: the portrait, therefore, in which Shakespeare has revealed most of

himself: he then shows that Romeo and Jaques are preliminary sketches, so to speak, for the great picture, and both taken together are a fair portrait of Hamlet. He clenches this argument by proving that Macbeth and Hamlet are one and the same person. This chapter in its searching and convincing analysis fairly bewitches us, and after half a dozen such chapters we are forced to admit that so far from hiding himself in his works, Shakespeare has painted himself at full length in twenty dramas.

When handling the historical plays, Mr. Harris draws special attention to the new characters Shakespeare added, and thus pictures him for us again beyond the possibility of doubt; we are simply compelled to recognize the same traits in the gentle loving Arthur, in the irresolute Richard II., and in the saintly Henry VI., that we find in Biron, Valentine, Romeo, Jaques, Hamlet, Macbeth, Posthumus and Prospero.

After considering and comparing all these portraits till the outlines of Shakespeare's character are clear and certain, Mr. Harris goes on (still from his works) to show how his little vanities idealized the portrait and so we come to see "Shakespeare as he was with his imperial intellect and small snobberies, his giant vices and paltry self-deceptions, his sweet gentleness and long martyrdom."

Armed with this knowledge of the man, we come to the sonnets and tragedy of Shakespeare's life. Mr. Harris uses the plays to prove Mr. Tyler's theory that Shakespeare fell in love with the wanton maid of honour, Mary Fitton. This is the most astounding part of an astounding book. Mr. Harris shows that the love episode of the sonnets did not end as Mr. Tyler supposed in 1600; Shakespeare took up his chains again and again and spent twelve years in love's slavery; to use his own words he was "a strumpet's fool. . . . the bellows and the fan to cool a harlot's lust." His great tragedies are but pictures of his various weaknesses. His life and work from 1597 onwards are one long hymn of passion, and Mr. Harris sets it all forth with perfect courage and perfect sympathy. For the first time the sonnet story is put in its true light, and the wonder of wonders is that no one has seen it before, or even guessed its significance in Shakespeare's life.

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